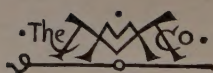


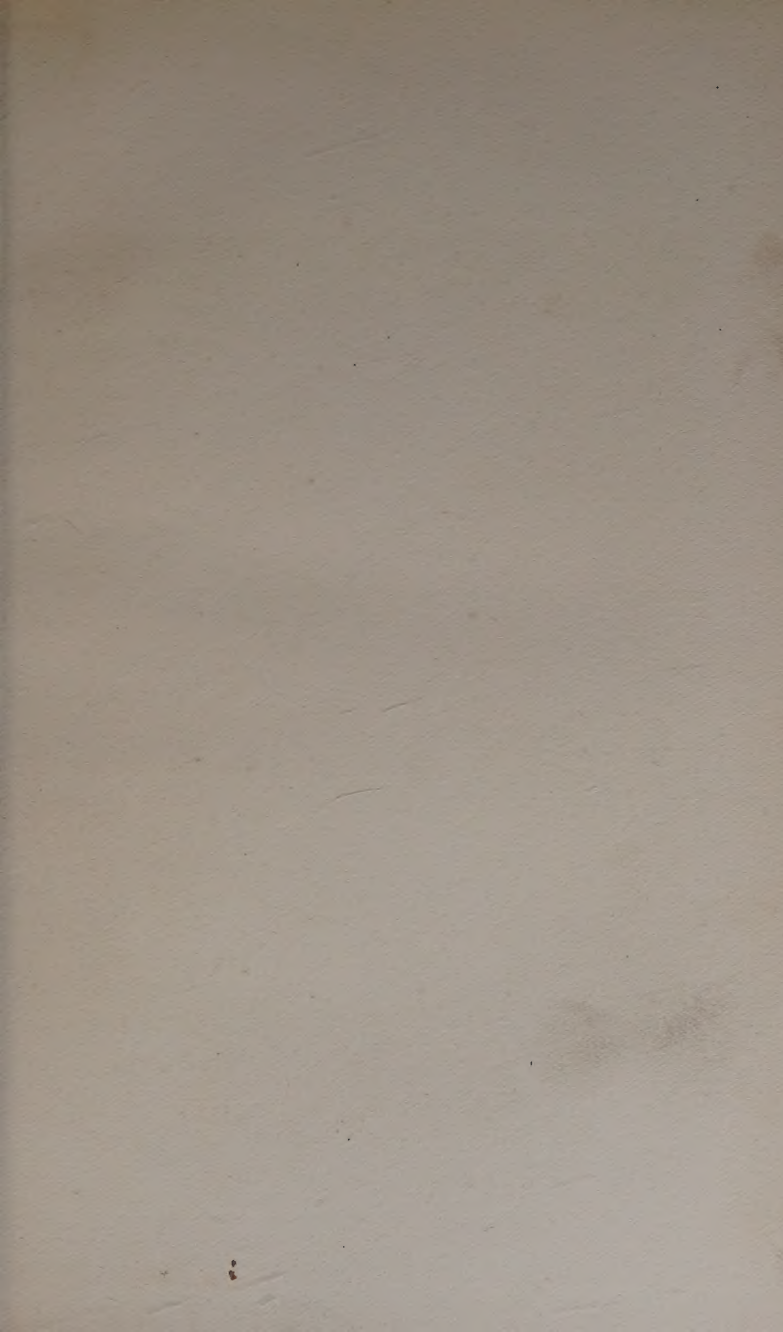


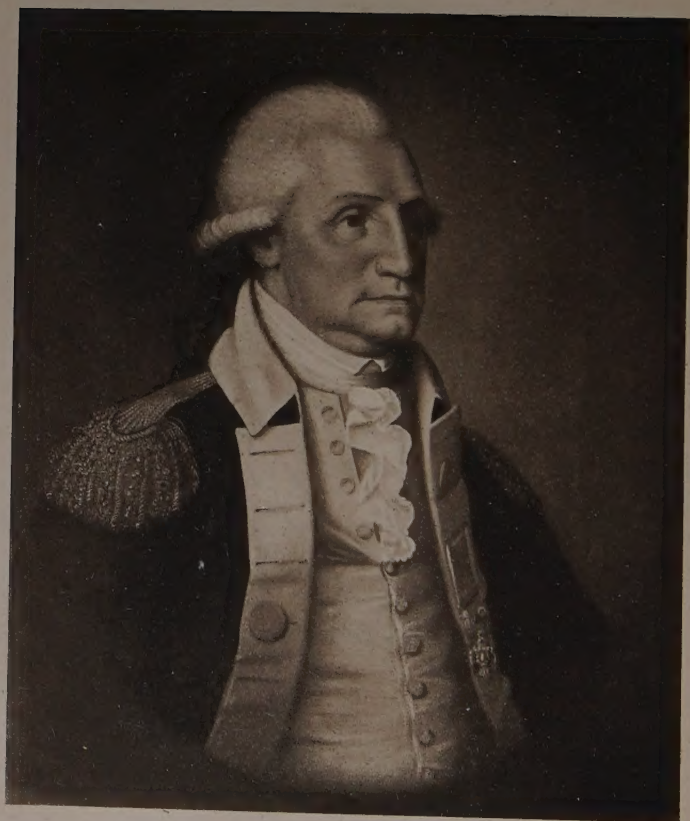
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GEORGE WASHINGTON







George Washington

GEORGE WASHINGTON

BY
NORMAN HAPGOOD

AUTHOR OF "ABRAHAM LINCOLN, THE MAN OF THE PEOPLE"
"LITERARY STATESMEN," "DANIEL WEBSTER," "THE
STAGE IN AMERICA," ETC.

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“To be the first man — not the Dictator — not the Sylla, but the Washington or the Aristides — the leader in talent and truth — is next to the Divinity !” — BYRON.

“The sobriety, the self-command, the perfect soundness of judgment, the perfect rectitude of intention, to which the history of revolutions furnishes no parallel, or furnishes a parallel in Washington alone.” — MACAULAY.

NOTE

REFERENCES and acknowledgments are made in notes throughout the volume, but it is a pleasure to mention here a more general obligation, to Miss Leslie Hopkinson, for a multitude of valuable suggestions, historical and literary; and, less personally, to the historian who has done more for the study of Washington than anybody since Sparks, Mr. Worthington C. Ford, whose edition of Washington's works I have generally used for quotations in preference to the less frankly edited older edition. Thanks are also due to Mr. Melvil Dewey for his courtesy in enabling me to obtain a facsimile of Washington's opinion of his field officers, the original of which is in the New York State Library; to the overseers of Harvard University for their permission to reproduce the portrait of Washington by Savage which hangs in Memorial Hall; and to Mr. W. B. Coleman for his kindness in allowing me to print a copy of the portrait by Rembrandt Peale which is in his possession.

N. H.

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GEORGE WASHINGTON

CHAPTER I

BOYHOOD

“Born upon our soil — of parents also born upon it — never for a moment having had sight of the old world — instructed according to the modes of his time, only in the spare, plain, but wholesome elementary knowledge which our institutions provide for the children of the people — growing up beneath and penetrated by the genuine influences of American society — living from infancy to manhood and age amidst our expanding, but not luxurious civilization — partaking in our great destiny of labor, our long contest with unreclaimed nature and uncivilized man — our agony of glory, the war of Independence — our great victory of peace, the formation of the Union, and the establishment of the Constitution, — he is all — all our own ! Washington is ours.” — DANIEL WEBSTER.

THE foremost man in our history showed his greatness not in the even current of life, but in his manner of meeting important events. The more reality is felt to be above romance, the higher will he stand. Goodness is universal rather than peculiar, and the greatness of Washington had its base in the power to be largely and impressively right. His eye received none of those phantoms whose unreal but inspiring beauty makes the heritage of the poet. Born to lead some

of the most difficult movements of history, he saw only the things which were, and his life illustrates the sublimity that truth and strength may reach without beauty or imagination. Of how little import is genius, compared with justice; charm, compared with humanity; the hues of fancy, compared with the price of bread; how far dearer to the race is Washington than many a genius whose visions have been the joy of millions!

The mind into which has once entered an interest in human welfare feels less need of fiction. Washington's appeal has been great to the masses, because he was a hero; not less strong to the first minds of all nations, also because he was a hero; but different from the rest. It is to the merely clever that he must frequently seem dull. Those to whom Washington seems good but uninteresting perhaps need an argument that goodness and interest are inseparable; that large rightness is, maturely seen, the foremost human trait. With this moral justness in Washington went courage. When the hidden savages yelled in the forest and Braddock's ranks wavered; when the Colonies were in upheaval; when soldiers mutinied, officers intrigued, and Congress haggled; when all was darkness, — in such times the silent powers emerged, rising always, greater at the end of the war than at the beginning, greatest when he stood, the centre, of the evolving nation, select-

ing and controlling the men who moulded her, — quelling faction and avoiding danger, retiring at last with the country launched on her strange experiment. The childhood of more salient personalities is often picturesque. Lincoln the boy, with the axe in his hand and a book in his heart; black Dan Webster's large eyes watching for images to make thought gorgeous; Franklin trudging through poverty toward knowledge; — to our backward gaze, these children shine with omens of the future. Not so George Washington. Futile alike are the most industrious inventors of myths and the most sentimental interpreters of facts; not until the time for deeds does any touch of distinction appear in his history. Cherry trees and miracles were invented for a hungry public. This poverty might be ascribed to chance and to barren witnesses were it not that, for many years after Washington became conspicuous in action, the accessible expressions of his personality were so bare that their interest depends wholly on his importance.

He was born at Wakefield, Westmoreland County, Virginia, February 22d, 1732, lived from 1735 to 1739 at what is now Mount Vernon, and when he was seven years old was taken to an estate on the Rappahannock, almost opposite Fredericksburg. The father was one of the prosperous planters of Virginia, able to give his children what

education the times could offer. His own library contained few books, mostly religious. The first teacher of George is reputed to have been a convict, whom his father bought for that purpose. The boy grew up like an aristocrat, and like a pioneer. Virginia planters, on roomy estates, surrounded by slaves and poor whites, held up their heads like nobles; but the difficulties of farming and the neighborhood of savages kept them virile. Thackeray had some slight reason for his belief that before the establishment of Independence there was no more aristocratic country in the world than Virginia. The poor whites had their pride also. They could handle a gun, and they had none of the peasant's humility. The blacks were in bondage, but already many owners looked upon slavery as wrong, unprofitable, and temporary. There was little to instil respect for sloth and divine right. Sons even of the best families knew the need of character and effort. The Washingtons were not at the head of society, but they stood well in it. Two brothers, John and Lawrence, of the minor English gentry, immigrated to Virginia, in the middle of the seventeenth century, with patents for land, and both rapidly increased their holdings. Colonel John, the great grandfather of George, was sufficiently enlightened to lodge a complaint, as soon as he landed, with the governor of Virginia, against the

captain of the vessel in which he immigrated as mate, for hanging a witch on the voyage. He was so fierce a fighter of Indians, against whom he commanded the Virginia troops in the War of 1675, that the redmen are said to have called him "town-destroyer"; and for his cruelty toward the savages he was reprimanded by the governor. Washington's maternal ancestors, the Balls, who immigrated in 1657, occupied a slightly lower station, and there is a rumor that John Ball's second wife, Washington's grandmother, was a housekeeper.

George's father died when the boy was eleven, leaving four children by his first wife and six, of whom George was the eldest, by his second. The estate now called Mount Vernon was left to the son Lawrence. If he should die childless, it was to go to George, who, besides, at his majority, was to receive a few hundred acres. In the meantime he lived with his mother, and spent much time with Lawrence and the neighboring family of Fairfaxes. That his learning was small is not to be attributed to scant opportunity, since he never showed much hunger for books, and many famous men, who later surrounded and obeyed him, won more education against greater odds. If he studied Latin, he never used or remembered it, nor, in spite of his frequent experience through life with the French, was he ever able to use their tongue. A story,

meagre in worth and plausibility, is handed down, that, while other boys played at recess, George stood behind the door and ciphered. The early literary accomplishment which has become most famous is the transcription into his copybook, possibly a mere practice in penmanship, of a lot of maxims, intelligent, foolish, and pedantic alike, without discrimination.

In mathematics only did he combine zeal with aptitude, for the exact and the practical were to be the basis of his power. In spelling and grammar he was inferior. Not only does the thriving instinct, as Parton says, grow best without culture, but even vigilance, which, natural in him, was fed by life in a wilderness, would have flourished less in a boy addicted to poetry and letters. A suggestive letter from one of the Fairfaxes to Lawrence says that George has promised to be "steady." His taste for bodily labor and adventure was doubtless suited by a proposition to send him to sea at fourteen. His mother's attitude is indicated in a letter from Robert Jackson, an intimate friend of the family, to Lawrence. "She offers several trifling objections, such as fond, unthinking mothers habitually suggest, and I find that one word against his going has more weight than ten for it." His baggage is said to have been already on board a British ship lying in the harbor, when a letter from Mrs. Washington's brother

Joseph, dated London, May 19th, 1746, arrived, and turned the scale, with the argument that such a career offered nothing to one who, like George, lacked family influence.

The following is an extract from Josiah Quincy's Journal for 1808:—

“November 15. At Congress. Early adjournment. In the evening Taggart, Lewis of Virginia, Tallmadge, etc., visited us. Lewis said there were no traditions circulating in Virginia concerning the youthful period of Washington's life of any great interest. He was always remarkable for great firmness and thoughtfulness, for love of athletic sports, and for great muscular strength, particularly great force of arm. He could throw a stone farther than any man in Virginia; and there was a mark on the side of the Natural Bridge, with Washington's name on the rock, it being the place to which he had, in 1750 or 1760, thrown a stone from below, as is the practice with persons visiting that wonder of nature. Washington's mark is twenty feet higher than any other.”

Washington attended a neighboring school, and was taught mathematics by a tutor named Williams, but all his schooling ended before he was sixteen. Meantime he learned to know society at the house of Lawrence, where many of the guests were officers, from whom George heard abundance of war talk. At the Fairfaxes, also, he lived in the atmosphere of the world, with some culture added, for Thomas, Lord Fairfax,

a misanthropic fox hunter, had been educated at Oxford, and had contributed to Addison's *Spectator*. On this lord's domain Washington did some of his first surveying, an occupation prompted by the demands of the country and by his love of mathematics and activity. At sixteen he was public surveyor of Culpeper County, and thenceforward, to be nearer his work, he lived regularly with his brother at Mount Vernon. In 1848 he left a journal, now in the Department of State at Washington, of one of his surveys for Lord Fairfax, which does more to prove precocity than do the famous rules of behavior. The sixteen-year-old boy notices the beauty of the country, but the language is simple, for not even his earliest known efforts show the rhetoric which usually precedes eloquence in an imaginative mind. "We went through most beautiful groves of sugar-trees, and spent the last part of the day in admiring the trees and the richness of the land." And certainly few boys of sixteen would tell a story in as mature a style as this:—

"We got our suppers and was lighted into a Room & I not being so good a woodsman as ye rest of my company, striped myself very orderly and went into ye Bed, as they calld it, when to my surprize, I found it to be nothing but a little straw matted together without sheets or any thing else, but only one thread bear blanket with double its weight of vermin, such as Lice,

Fleas, &c. I was glad to get up (as soon as ye Light was carried from us). I put on my cloths & lay as my companions. Had we not been very tired, I am sure we should not have slep'd much that night. I made a Promise not to sleep so from that time forward, chusing rather to sleep in ye open air before a fire, as will appear hereafter.

“Wednesday 16th. We set out early & finish'd about one o'clock & then Travelled up to Frederick Town, where our Baggage came to us. We cleaned ourselves (to get Rid of ye Game we had catched ye night before). I took a Review of ye Town & then return'd to our Lodgings where we had a good Dinner prepared for us. Wine & Rum Punch in plenty, & a good Feather Bed with clean sheets, which was a very agreeable regale.”

These words point to some physical delicacy, in spite of his unusual size and strength, and a few days later he records his belief that the road was the worst ever trod by man or beast. An Indian dance, which he calls comical, he describes without humor, but with a sense of the grotesque, as he does also a group of poor whites who followed them. Of the dance he says:—

“Wednesday, 23rd. Raind till about two o'clock & cleard, when we were agreeably surprized at ye sight of thirty odd Indians coming from war with only one scalp. We had some Liquor with Us of which we gave them Part, it elevating there spirits, put them in ye humor of Dauncing, of whom we had a War Daunce. There manner of Dauncing is as follows: They clear a Large Circle & make a great Fire in ye middle. Men seats

themselves around it. Ye speaker makes a grand speech, telling them in what manner they are to daunce. After he has finished ye best Dauncer jumps up as one awaked out of a sleep, & Runs & Jumps about ye Ring in a most comicle manner. He is followed by ye Rest. Then begins there musicians to Play. Ye musick is a Pot half full of water, with a Deerskin streched over it as tight as it can & a goard with some shott in it to rattle & a Piece of an horse's tail tied to it to make it look fine. Ye one keeps rattling & ye others drumming all ye while ye others is Dauncing."

And of the people:—

"Monday, 4th:—This Morning Mr. Fairfax left us with intent to go down by ye mouth of ye Branch. We did two Lots & was attended by a great Company of People, men, Women, & children, that attended us through ye woods as we went, shewing there antick tricks. I really think they seem to be as ignorant a set of people as the Indians. They would never speak English but when spoken to, they speak all Dutch."

Shooting wild turkeys was the feat most emphasized in the Journal, but dangers and hardships existed in profusion. The straw on which Washington slept caught fire, and he was saved by the chance awakening of a companion. The tent was blown away by the wind. A rattlesnake was seen. Provisions were exhausted, and hunger was felt. When they did eat, every one was his own cook, the spits were forked sticks, the plates large chips, and "as for dishes we had none." The boy's atti-

tude toward this life was doubtless enthusiastic when the adventures were in the foreground, but at other times, when he sat down to sum up his fate, he could write, and either wholly or histrionically feel, like this : —

“ I seem to be in a place where no real satisfaction is to be had. Since you received my letter in October last, I have not sleep'd above three nights or four in a bed, but, after walking a good deal all the day, I lay down before the fire upon a little hay, straw, fodder, or bearskin, which ever is to be had, with man, wife, and children, like a parcel of dogs and cats ; and happy is he, who gets the berth nearest the fire. There's nothing would make it pass off tolerably but a good reward. A doubloon is my constant gain every day that the weather will permit my going out, and sometimes six pistoles. The coldness of the weather will not allow of my making a long stay, as the lodging is rather too cold for the time of year. I have never had my clothes off, but lay and sleep in them, except the few nights I have lay'n in Frederic Town.”

Woman already existed for the youthful woodsman. To this period belong a couple of tributes to her power in boyish and imitative verse, and drafts and copies of letters, in which the most famous phrase, the “lowland beauty,” has produced little but futile guessing. It occurs thus : —

“ My place of residence is at present at his lordship's where I might, was my heart disengaged, pass my time very pleasantly, as there's a very agreeable young lady

lives in the same house. But as that's only adding fuel to fire, it makes me the more uneasy, for by often and unavoidably being in company with her revives my former passion for your Lowland Beauty; whereas, was I to live more retired from young women, I might elevate in some measure my sorrows by burying that chaste and troublesome passion in the grave of oblivion or etearnall forgetfulness, for as I am very well assured, that's the only antidote or remedy that I ever shall be relieved by or only recess that can administer any cure or help to me, as I am well convinced, was I ever to attempt anything, I should only get a denial which would be only adding grief to uneasiness."

Of his reading, we have the notes, under date of March 15th, 1748: "Read to the reign of King John," and "In the Spectator read to 143," and for abstract cogitation this, "Whats the noblest Passion of the Mind Qy." A careful memorandum is made of the clothes carried with him, and includes seven waistcoats, four neckcloths, and seven caps. The extreme precision of his nature appears in this memorandum: "The regulator of my watch now is 4m: and over the fifth from the slow end." Thus the picture of the boy is distinct, although not yet distinguished. The tone is clear, honest, didactic, with the inevitable sentiments, but less than the usual sentimentality; a mature, thinking, exact mind, trained by men and deeds, sensitive to hardship but becoming inured to it, interested in figures, using logarithms in sur-

veying, noting precisely the state of his wardrobe and his watch, rejoicing in the doubloon, and never going astray after vain imaginings. When he did anything, he knew why; he "never mistook nor misapplied his talents"; and he became ready for any deed which required a sane mind, a sound character, and practical experience.

Several years passed in this life, — society at the Fairfaxes, military talk at Mount Vernon, occasional visits to his mother, and growing familiarity with surveying, topography, and Indians. He writes in May, 1749, that he hopes it will be unnecessary for him to go to Williamsburg to see his brother, because "My horse is in very poor order to undertake such a journey, and is in no likelihood of mending, for want of corn sufficient to support him." The rich in Virginia, in those days, were "land poor." They owned many acres and many slaves, and obtained few of the results for which land is accumulated and labor employed. Two years later, when he was nineteen, George was adjutant general (with the rank of major) in one of four military districts into which Virginia was divided.

Lawrence, a victim of consumption, sailed for the Barbadoes September 28th, 1751, and took with him George, who carefully copied, every day, the log book, and noted the wind and weather. In the West Indies they spent a dull time, no

change of seasons, the same prospect, no bracing weather, too much relaxation, and "no bodily diversions but dancing, which frequently produces yellow fever." So wrote Lawrence, but George, who was in better health, apparently had a happier time. He records dinners and teas, and rides in which he was "perfectly enraptured with the beautiful prospects, which every side presented to our view, — the fields of cane, corn, fruit trees, etc., in a delightful green." Board was "extravagantly dear." "Fifteen pounds a month were his terms, exclusive of liquor and washing, which we find." He notes, however, in favor of the boarding place, that "the prospect is extensive by land and pleasant by sea." One of the most remarkable entries is this:—

"15. Was treated with a ticket to see the play of *George Barnwell* acted. The character of Barnwell and several others were said to be well performed. There was music adapted and regularly conducted."¹

As he apparently went, the *said to be* is an early instance of his unwillingness to pass personal judgment on matters of which he was ignorant. To a three weeks' attack of the small pox he devotes just three lines, although it left him marked for life, and on his first day out of the

¹ Mr. Sparks doubtless corrected the style. In general, I have not wished to put much stress, in quotation, on these details, giving only enough peculiarities of spelling and grammar to show Washington's lack of proficiency.

house he went to court to see a wealthy man of "infamous character" acquitted, and to record his judgment that the witness who turned the scale had been suborned. Now, although so young, he notes that the governor of the Barbadoes keeps a proper state at small expense, avoids the errors of his predecessors, gives no handle for complaint, but by declining familiarity loses popularity; he comments on the formation of the hills, the fruits, the quality of the soil, the crops and their value, the poorness of the food, amount of debt, hospitality, manners, number of taverns, longevity, taxes, laws, discipline, and fortifications; all these things are concisely noted by the boy of nineteen. He returned to Virginia, and Lawrence went to Bermuda, failed to improve, and returned home to die, at the age of thirty-four. George stayed at Mount Vernon, which in a few months became his through the death of his niece; and he acted as head of the family. One of his occupations, after the return, is shown in a letter written about four months after he got back to Virginia, to William Fauntleroy, Sr., in Richmond, brother of "Miss Betsy."

"MAY 20, 1752.

"SIR: I should have been down long before this, but my business in Frederick detained me somewhat longer than I expected, and immediately upon my return from thence I was taken with a violent pleurise, which has reduced me very low; but purpose, as soon as I recover

my strength, to wait on Miss Betsy, in hopes of a revocation of the former cruel sentence, and see if I can meet with any alteration in my favor, I have enclosed a letter to her, which should be much obliged to you for the delivery of it. I have nothing to add but my best respects, to your good lady and family, and that I am, sir,

“Your most ob't humble Serv't.

“G. WASHINGTON.”

SOME OF THE MORE INTERESTING PASSAGES FROM WASHINGTON'S
JOURNAL OF HIS JOURNEY OVER THE MOUNTAINS, BEGUN
FRIDAY, MARCH 11, 1747.

A Journal of my Journey over
the Mountains began Fryday
the 11th of March 1740

Fryday March 11th 1740
Began my Journey in company
with George Fairfax Esq^r; we tra-
velled this day 40 Miles to Mr
George Heasels in Prince William
County

Saturday March 12th This Morn-
ing Mr James Gerrif^{came to us} Surveyor
we travelld over y^e Blue Ridge
to Capt Ashbys on Shannondoa
River, Nothing remarkable hap-
pen'd

Sunday March 13 rode to his

Lordokyo Quarter about ^AMiles
higher up of River we went through
most beautiful Groves of Sugar
Trees. & spent y. byt part of y.
Day in admiring y. Trees & rich
rep of y. Land

Monday 14th We sent our Bag-
gage to Capt. Pennington's (near Frederick Town) went our
selves down of River about 16
miles to Capt. Isaac Pennington
(the Land exceeding thick & fertile
all y. way produces abundance
of Grain Hemp Tobacco &c)
in order to buy of some Land
on Bates Marsh & Long Marsh

Tuesday 15th We set out early
with Intent to run round y. P. Land
but being taken in a Rain & it
creasing very fast obliged us to re-
turn it clearing about one o'clock
& our time being too Precious to
Loose. we a second time ventured
out & Worked hard till Night
& then returned to Pennington we got
our Suppers & was Lighted into a
Room & I not being so good a Wood
man as y. rest of my company
stripped my self very orderly & went
in to y. Bed as they called it when
to my surprize I found it to be
nothing but a Little Straw

matted together without sheets
or any thing else but only one
thread bear blanket with double
its weight of Vermin such as
Lice Fleas &c. I was glad to get
up (as soon as y. Light was carri
ed from us) & put on my clothes &
Lay as my companions Had we
not have been very tired I am sure
we should not have slept much
that night. I made a Promise a
~~promise~~ not to sleep so from that
time forward choosing rather to
sleep in y. open Air before a fire
as will appear hereafter

Wednesday 28? Rained till about
two o'clock & cleared ~~up~~ when
we were agreeably surprised at the
sight of thirty or Indians coming
from War with only one scalp we
had some liquor with us of which
we gave them Part it elevating these
spirits put them in y^e Stammer of
Dancing of whom we had a War
Dance the manner of Danc-
ing is as follows Viz They clear
a large circle & make a great
fire in y^e middle then seat them
selves around in y^e speaker
makes a grand loud speech

Solomon Hedges Esqr one
of his Majestys Justices
of y^e Peace for y^e Coun-
ty of Frederick where we
camped when we came to supper
there was neither a cloth upon
y^e Table nor a Knife to eat with
but as good luck would have it
we had Knives of fawn

Sunday 27th Travell'd over to
y^e South Branch attended with y^e
Esqr) to Henry Danmetris in
order to go about Intended work
of Lots

CHAPTER II

WOODSMAN AND DIPLOMAT AT TWENTY-ONE

"The habits of a vigorous mind are formed in contending with difficulties. All history will convince you of this, and that wisdom and penetration are the fruit of experience, not the lessons of retirement and leisure. Great necessities call out great virtues. When a mind is raised and animated by scenes that engage the heart, then those qualities, which would otherwise lie dormant, wake into life and form the character of the hero and the statesman." — MRS. JOHN ADAMS.

THE governor of Virginia, along with the other Colonial governors, was instructed by Great Britain, in 1753, to serve notice on the French that their forts built on western lands claimed by the English were an encroachment. He was also ordered, if the French resisted, to employ force. Looking about for a messenger to perform the hazardous mission, a journey through five or six hundred miles of forests, — an errand requiring diplomacy, courage, experience in the woods, tact with savages, and information about forts, — Governor Dinwiddie selected a man of twenty-one, whom, in a message to another governor, he described as "a person of distinction." This tall, grave, and handsome youth

set out for the Ohio River on the last day of October. Arrived the next day at Fredericksburg, he engaged as French interpreter his former fencing-master, Jacob Vanbraam, who had also served with Captain Lawrence. The Indian interpreter was John Davidson. Arrived at what is now Cumberland, Major Washington engaged as guide Christopher Gist, a trader who had made settlements and taken possession for the Ohio Company of the country claimed by both nations; and also engaged as aids four other men, two of them Indian traders. Heavy rains and deep snows made the forests even more than commonly difficult; their progress was slow, and they had to borrow a canoe from an Indian trader and send two of their men with the baggage down the Monongahela to meet the rest of the party at the forks of the Ohio. Washington studied these forks particularly with reference to situations for forts. While looking over the forks and their suitability to fortification, he called to invite Shingiss, "King of the Delawares," to the council that was to be held at Logstown, whither they arrived twenty-five days after leaving Williamstown. In the absence of "the Half-King," a principal chief of the allied tribes who owned the land for which two white races were contesting, Washington explained his errand to another chief, to whom he gave a string of wampum and some tobacco, re-

questing him to send for the Half-King, which he promised to do, by runner, in the morning. Meantime the young major invited the chief "and the other great men" to his tent and talked with them. He made what observations he could, and the next day received further information from some French deserters who passed by. In the evening the Half-King arrived. At a private conference in Washington's tent, the chief, the major, and the interpreter were alone. With Indian eloquence the chief described the argument he had addressed to the French commandant, the gist of which was that he had no objection to trading with either the French or the English, but that his people would not permit foreigners to build upon the land claimed by his people. The commandant had answered with contempt, and the Half-King was hostile to the French. The next day, at a general council, Washington addressed the Indians as his friends and allies, told vaguely his mission, and requested guidance and protection to the French headquarters. The Half-King requested a delay until he could send for "the French speech-belt," which was to be returned to the French as a sign that the alliance with them was over, and for certain warriors as a guard. Washington answered that he must push forward. The chief showed displeasure, and Washington, although he was inclined to be imperious with Indians, could not

afford to affront the Half-King. Two days after came a question which he had been dreading. One of the sachems called at his tent, and after the usual solemn Indian preliminaries, asked the nature of his errand to the French. As this was information which the savages could not safely have, Washington had prepared answers which should say just enough to allay Indian curiosity. Thus early was he compelled to study what to reveal and what to secrete, and the truth was never a fetich with him.

He was chafing with impatience, but of such moment for the impending conflict was the Indian good will, that he submitted to further procrastination. He had small faith in the honesty of savages. When, as one reason for delay, they urged the illness of a chief's wife, Washington silently saw the real cause in fear of the French. Still he endeavored to treat them as brothers and allies, although in handling Indians he could never rival in adeptness his French rivals, and apparently the first impression of the Half-King, like the last, was that Washington did not treat Indian chiefs as equals. His nature was commanding, but such experience increased in him the combination which John Quincy Adams later described as the spirit of command wedded to the spirit of meekness. The next day he observed another lie; to the elaborate explanation of the Ind-

ians that they sent a small guard of only four so as to avoid arousing French suspicion, Washington adds his own belief that the chiefs were unable to get their hunters in. On the last day of November, accompanied by Jeskakake, White Thunder, the Half-King, and one of their best hunters, the party at last set out. On December 4th they found the colors of the French hoisted on a house from which they had driven John Frazer, an English subject. Washington approached and found three officers, one of whom, Captain Chalbert de Joncaire, son of a French officer and a Seneca squaw, said that he had command of the Ohio, but advised Washington to apply for his answer to a general officer at the neighboring fort. Inviting the English party to sup, he treated them with French courtesy, until conviviality got the better of discretion.

“The Wine, as they dosed themselves pretty plentifully with it, soon banished the Restraint which at first appeared in their Conversation ; and gave a Licence to their Tongues to reveal their Sentiments more freely.

“They told me, That it was their absolute Design to take Possession of the *Ohio*, and by G— they would do it ; For that altho’ they were sensible the *English* could raise two Men for their one ; yet they knew their Motions were too slow and dilatory to prevent any Undertaking of theirs.”

Part of the events of the next three days, showing how much dexterity such a situation invited, are thus told in Washington’s words :—

"5th. Rain'd excessively all Day, which prevented our Travelling. Capt. *Joncaire* sent for the Half-King, as he had but just heard that he came with me; He affected to be much concerned that I did not make free to bring them in before. I excused it in the best Manner I was capable, and told him, I did not think their company agreeable, as I had heard him say a good deal in Dispraise of *Indians* in general. But another Motive prevented me from bringing them into his Company; I knew he was Interpreter, and a Person of very great Influence among the Indians, and had lately used all possible Means to draw them over to their Interest; therefore I was desirous of giving no Opportunity that could be avoided.

"When they came in, there was great Pleasure expressed at seeing them. He wondered how they could be so near without coming to visit him; made several trifling Presents; and applied Liquor so fast, that they were soon rendered incapable of the Business they came about, notwithstanding the Caution which was given.

"6th. The Half-King came to my Tent, quite sober, and insisted very much that I should stay and hear what he had to say to the *French*. I fain would have prevented his speaking any Thing till he came to the Commandant, but could not prevail. . . .

"7th. . . . We found it extremely difficult to get the *Indians* off To-day, as every Strategem had been used to prevent their going-up with me. I had last Night, left *John Davison* (the Indian Interpreter whom I brought with me from Town), and strictly charged him not to be out of their Company, as I could not get them over to my Tent; for they had some Business with *Kustaloga*, and chiefly to know the Reason why he did not deliver up the *French* Belt which he had in Keeping: But I was obliged to send Mr. Gist over To-day to fetch them; which he did with great Persuasion."

On the 7th they departed, against difficulties which may be suggested by some extracts from the journal of Gist,¹ who wrote with business-like concision an account of the journey.

“The creek being very high, we were obliged to carry all our baggage over on trees, and swim our horses. The Major and I went first with our boots on.”

“Monday, 10th. Our Indians killed a bear. Here we had a Creek to cross, very deep; we got over on a tree, and got our goods over.”

They arrived, Washington delivered his letter, and while the officers held a council, he took the dimensions of the fort, and estimated the number of soldiers and canoes.

“As I found many Plots concerted to retard the *Indians* Business, and prevent their returning with me; I endeavor’d all that lay in my Power to frustrate their Schemes, and hurry them on to execute their intended Design.”

Washington therefore urged on the conference between the Indians and the French, and learned after it from the Half-King that the French spoke to the savages with friendliness and promised to send some goods to Logstown for them.

“But I rather think the Design of that is, to bring away all our straggling Traders they meet with as I

¹ Gist’s Journal is printed in the Mass. Hist. Col., Vol. 5, 3d series.

privately understood they intended to carry an Officer, &c., with them. And what rather confirms this Opinion, I was enquiring of the Commander, by what Authority he had made Prisoners of several of our English Subjects. He told me that the Country belong'd to them; that no *Englishman* had a Right to trade upon those Waters; and that he had Orders to make every Person Prisoner who attempted it on the *Ohio*, or the Waters of it."

Washington received the answer to the governor's letter on the 14th, but the French were successful in refusing to accept back the belt. The diary now proceeds:—

"15th. The Commandant ordered a plentiful Store of Liquor, Provision, &c., to be put on Board our Canoe; and appeared to be extremely complaisant, though he was exerting every Artifice which he could invent to set our own *Indians* at Variance with us, to prevent their going 'till after our Departure. Presents, Rewards and every Thing which could be suggested by him or his Officers,—I can't say that ever in my Life I suffered so much Anxiety as I did in this Affair: I saw that every Stratagem which the most fruitful Brain could invent, was practised, to win the Half-King to their interest; and that leaving him here was giving them the Opportunity they aimed at,—I went to the Half-King, and press'd him in the strongest Terms to go: He told me the Commandant would not discharge him 'till the Morning. I then went to the Commandant and desired him to do their Business; and complain'd of ill Treatment: For keeping them, as they were Part of my Company, was detaining me. This he promised not to do, but to forward my Journey as much as he could. He protested

he did not keep them, but was ignorant of the Cause of their Stay ; though I soon found it out : — He had promised them a present of Guns, &c., if they would wait 'till the morning.

“ As I was very much press'd, by the *Indians*, to wait this Day, for them, I consented, on a Promise, That nothing should hinder them in the Morning.

“ 16th. The *French* were not slack in their Inventions to keep the *Indians* this Day also : But as they were obligated, according to Promise, to give the Present, they then endeavoured to try the Power of Liquor ; which I doubt not would have prevailed at any other Time than this ; But I urged and insisted with the King so closely upon his Word, that he refrained, and set off with us as he had engaged.”

Under date of the 22d Gist makes this urbane entry : —

“ Set out. The creek began to be very low, and we were forced to get out, to keep our Canoe from over-setting, several times ; the water freezing to our clothes ; and we had the pleasure of seeing the French overset, and the brandy and wine floating in the creek, and run by them, and left them to shift for themselves.”

The next day the Half-King found a reason for delay.

“ As I found he intended to stay here a Day or two, and knew that Monsieur *Joncaire* would employ every Scheme to set him against the *English* as he had before done ; I told him I hoped he would guard against Flattery, and let no fine Speeches influence him in their Favour.”

The horses were now showing such signs of exhaustion, that all except the drivers proceeded on foot, Washington in a hunting dress. In a few days he became so uneasy to get back to the governor with his report, that he requested Gist to accompany him on a short cut on foot through the woods.

"Indeed," says Gist, "I was unwilling he should undertake such a travel, who had never been used to walking before this time. But as he insisted on it, I set out with our packs, like Indians, and travelled eighteen miles. That night we lodged at an Indian cabin, and the major was much fatigued."

So frozen was everything, that they could scarcely find water to drink. The next day, near a place called Murdering Town, they met a savage who pretended to be friendly, and called Gist by his Indian name. The trader remembered him as one he had seen at the French fort, and as the major insisted on going the nearest way to the forks of the Allegheny, they asked the Indian to show the route. Washington's feet soon grew sore, and his body weary, and he wished to encamp. The Indian offered to carry his gun, and when the major refused, the savage grew churlish, and pressed the whites to proceed, on the plea of escaping hostile Indians. From various signs they soon mistrusted this red guide.

Suddenly the savage, walking only fifteen paces ahead, turned and fired.

"Are you shot?" asked Washington.

"No," replied Gist.

They rushed on the Indian, who was reloading behind a white oak. When they had captured him Gist wished to kill him, but Washington refused, and it was therefore necessary to watch him closely.

"As you will not have him killed," said Gist, "we must get away, and then we must travel all night."

The trader then turned to the Indian and pretended to believe that the gun went off by accident, adding: "Do you go home, and as we are very much tired, we will follow your track in the morning; and here is a cake of bread for you, and you must give us meat in the morning."

The Indian seemed glad to get off so easily. Gist followed and listened until he was fairly out of the way, and then returned for Washington, led him half a mile to a place where they built a fire, left it, travelled all night, and arrived in the morning at the head of Piney Creek. All that day also they pressed on without rest, down the creek, and just as night came on, they saw more Indian tracks. For greater security they separated after dark, appointing a place further on to meet. When they came together there they decided

that it was safe enough to encamp and sleep. Difficulties and dangers in plenty remained. Travelling all the next day, they reached a stream which they expected to find frozen. Instead, the ice was driving in vast quantities. With one poor hatchet they spent a whole day building a raft. Before they were halfway across, the ice caught Washington's pole and jerked him into the stream. He seized the raft and climbed back, and they struggled on, vainly trying for either shore. Finally, they jumped into the freezing water and reached an island. Gist had all his fingers frozen, and part of his toes. In the morning the ice was solid, and they reached Frazer's, where they encountered a party characteristic of the times. Twenty Indians were there, who had been going to war, from which they were dissuaded by finding seven white people killed, and all scalped but one, a woman, as they explained, with definiteness, who had very light hair. The bodies, lying about the house, were being eaten by hogs. Fearing that the whites would take them for the murderers, these warriors hastily returned and declared that the guilty Indians were doubtless French sympathizers from the Ottawa nation.

Gist and Washington intended to take horses at this point, and as it would require some time to find them, the major took a little trip of three

miles to visit the Indian queen, Aliquippa, who had resented his omission to call upon her on the journey to the fort. Washington presented her with a match-coat and a bottle of rum, "which latter," says he, "was thought much the best present of the two."

Even after they were on horseback, a mode of travel to which he was more accustomed, Washington describes the journey as being as fatiguing as it is possible to conceive. There was but one day without incessant snow or rain, and the cold was always intense. This sort of thing toughened the young man's spirit and strengthened his body, but it left him subject to fevers and pleurisies. He delivered his papers to the governor on January 16th. The Journal was printed in the newspapers and republished abroad by the British Government.

CHAPTER III

FIGHTING IN THE WILDERNESS

"It was strange that in a savage forest of Pennsylvania, a young Virginian officer should fire a shot, and waken up a war that was to last for sixty years, which was to cover his own country and pass into Europe, to cost France her American colonies, to sever ours from us, and create the great Western Republic; to rage over the Old World when extinguished in the New; and, of all the myriads engaged in the vast contest, to leave the prize of the greatest fame with him who struck the first blow." — THACKERAY.

THE commandant's reply showed that the French were firm in their pretensions, and the governor of Virginia was pugnacious. After endeavoring to induce coöperation by the other colonies, and being met by indifference, scepticism, and technical difficulties, he and his council nevertheless decided to raise, by draft if necessary, two companies, of one hundred men each, who were to cross the mountains and assemble at the mouth of Redstone Creek, a branch of the Monongahela, where the Ohio Company had put up a structure, and complete or build a fort there. A road for cannon and wagons must be cut through a dense forest, over two ranges of high mountains and countless hills and streams.

Captain William Trent, a business associate of Benjamin Franklin, was to command one company. He was sent forward to enlist his men among the traders and frontier settlers, and begin work at once, and Major Washington was to procure enlistments, superintend the transportation of supplies and cannon from Alexandria, and then proceed to the fort. His instructions contained these brisk words:—

“You are to act on the defensive, but in case any attempts are made to obstruct the works or interrupt our settlements by any persons whatsoever, you are to restrain all such offenders, and in case of resistance to make prisoners of, or kill and destroy them.”

Washington found enlistment difficult. The men clamored for their pay, and there was neither paymaster nor set time for payment. His recruits were mainly from the homeless and idle poor; he had no clothes to cover them; shoes, stockings, shirts, coats, and waistcoats were lacking, and the men wished him to advance his own money and reimburse himself from their pay,—a risk which he was both unwilling and unable to incur. Merchants would not furnish clothing with no certainty of payment. While engaged in this work, Washington sought and obtained promotion. He denied any wish for the chief command, on account of his youth and inexperience, but flattered himself that as lieutenant colonel under “a

skilful commander or man of sense" his application and diligent study would render him worthy of his position. This reply was received from a member of the governor's council: —

"DEAR GEORGE: I enclose you your commission. God prosper you with it. Your friend,

RICHARD CORBIN."

He sought a command for his old fencing-master and interpreter, Jacob Vanbraam, recommending him highly, and on April 2d, 1754, with two companies, aggregating about one hundred and fifty men, soon increased by a detachment under Captain Stephen, he began his march toward the Ohio. An express from Trent, received on the 19th, demanding reënforcements, came too late, as Washington soon learned that in Trent's absence his men, confronted by a superior force, had surrendered the fort. Two young Indians brought a message from the Half-King that he was ready for immediate war. Washington, sending messages to the chief, as well as to the governors of three colonies, began a slow advance across the mountains, preparing a road for the passage of cannon. His letters breathed the spirit of combat. To the governor of Maryland he wrote that the cause ought to arouse the heroic spirit of every free-born Englishman. To the Half-King he alleged that the colonists resented the usage

of the treacherous French, and held the interest of the Indians as dear as their lives. He stated that their hearts were glowing with affection for the savages, and signed himself "your friend and brother, Washington, or Conotocarius," the Town Destroyer, a name apparently inherited by him through the excellent memory of the Indian. The editor of the principal French source of information on this campaign thinks, however, that Washington took on the name to please the savages, "whom he wished to seduce." He was certainly not the prig of Weems and of tradition. He wrote to Dinwiddie, about his impressment of wagons, that, while he had strained the law, he had done it for the good of the service, and expected support from the authorities, in case any busybody intermeddled.

So difficult was the work of widening the road through the forests that they made only from two to four miles a day, and, while they plodded on, retreating traders told them of great reënforcements for the French, who were also actively bribing the Indians. Washington's effective force was about one hundred and fifty, as he had sent away Trent's men, who had joined him after surrendering the fort, because their privileges and freedom from martial law demoralized the Virginians. He sent off a detachment under Stephen to discover the French, capture any stragglers,

find a good place for a fort, and send in the Half-King. Early in May French scouts were seen within six or seven miles of Washington's camp. He looked for safety to the Indians, and begged for materials to bribe them in competition with the French. The behavior of the Virginia government enraged his officers, and he himself was so disgusted with his pay that he asked to serve as a volunteer, preferring, as he put it, to dig as a day laborer rather than to serve upon such ignoble terms. He complained also of the small allowance of minor officers, with so few of whom it was as impossible to do the necessary duty as to conquer kingdoms with his handful of men. Dinwiddie treated these complaints as unreasonable and pernicious, and the Virginians, unwilling to resign in the face of danger, had to swallow their pride.

Washington sent another message to the Half-King, urging him to march vigorously to the aid of his brethren the English, who would protect him against the French, — a “treacherous enemy,” who, according to the colonel's allegations, refused even provisions to the Indian who visited their fort, whereas he called attention to the fact that the young Indian who served as messenger had been fed by the English as much as “his heart could wish.”

On the 23d of May he heard that the French

had sent off an expedition with extreme secrecy. The Indian who was helping Washington explore the Youghiogheny, a branch of the Monongahela, in hopes of finding it navigable, refused to go more than a short distance, until Washington promised him a ruffled shirt, — a gift which he had to take from his personal supply, having no stock of presents. He wrote to his superior officer, Colonel Fry, that four or five hundred pounds in goods to be offered to Indians for particular services would accomplish more than as many thousands given at a treaty.

On the 24th a messenger from the Half-King asserted that the French were on their way to attack the English. Washington put his men behind two natural intrenchments at Great Meadows, where, by clearing the bushes, he made what he described to Dinwiddie as “a charming field for an encounter.” Scouring parties found no enemy, but Gist came in on the 27th with the news that fifty men had passed his house, twelve or thirteen miles away. Washington immediately detached seventy-five men to follow them. In this situation he grew still more anxious for Indian aid, and he was compelled to give them liquor for everything they did. He told the young Indians in the camp that the French sought to kill their chief the Half-King, and this fiction “had its desired effect.” The

same evening came a message from the Half-King, that he had discovered the tracks of two men, which led to a low glen, where the French were probably concealed. On the instant, Washington sent off forty men, ordered his ammunition to be concealed, left a guard, and set out, in the black night and heavy rain, with his remaining force. All night they marched, on a path hardly wide enough for one, frequently losing it, and following one another, until almost sunrise, when, after hopelessly losing one man, they reached the Indian camp, where they held a council, and decided on a joint attack. Two men went to survey the ground, and then the force marched, Indian fashion, single file, to surround the French. When they approached the rocky hollow, where the French were supposed to be, they separated, the Indians on the left, the Virginians, with Washington in the lead, on the right. The French were taken by surprise. The first man they saw was the young Virginian leader. They reached for their arms, and Washington immediately gave the word to fire. The French replied, and for ten or fifteen minutes there was a sharp exchange. The Indians being securely hidden, the Virginians received the fire. A French Canadian fled at the beginning of the fight. The commander, an ensign, Coulon de Jumonville, fell, and the Half-King afterward boasted, with Indian

magniloquence, that he killed him with his tomahawk. Nine other Frenchmen also fell dead. According to Adam Stephen, who was in the fight, the guns of the English were so wet that they trusted to the bayonet. Finally, when a third of the French, who seem to have fought creditably, were dead, the rest surrendered, twenty-one in number, whereupon the Indians scalped the corpses, appropriated most of their arms, and thenceforth boasted of doing all the work. The Virginians and their savages proceeded with the prisoners to the Indian camp, where Washington urged the Half-King to go to Winchester to see the governor, but the chief refused, and preferred to send messengers with scalps to the allied nations, inviting them to take up the hatchet. An Indian version of these incidents runs as follows:¹—

“Ten were killed and twenty-one were taken alive whom we delivered to Colonel Washington, telling him that we had blooded the edge of his hatchet a little.

“Davison said he was in the action and that there were but eight Indians who did most of the execution that was done. Colonel Washington and the Half-King differed much in judgment, and on the Colonel's refusing to take his advice the English and Indians separated. After which the Indians discovered the French in an hollow and hid themselves, lying on their bellies behind a hill; afterwards they discovered Colonel

¹ Weiser's Journal.

Washington on the opposite side of the hollow in the gray of the morning, and when the English fired, which they did in great confusion, the Indians came out of their cover and closed with the French and killed them with their tomahawks, on which the French surrendered."

Washington, having lost but one man killed and two or three wounded, marched on, the colonel of twenty-two years; although pleased with his exploit, little knowing what a place in history his small victory was to take. This, the first certain slaughter of the Seven Years' War, has occupied the imagination of the world, and given occasion to much literature. "Such was the complication of political interests," says Voltaire, "that a cannon shot fired in America could give the signal that set Europe in a blaze." "Not a cannon shot," remarks Parkman, "but a volley from the hunting pieces of a few backwoodsmen commanded by George Washington."

The fight led to some charges against "the cruel Vvasington," as he is called by a French chronicler of the time. The prisoners informed him that they had been sent with a summons ordering him to depart, — a plea which Washington treated as a pretence to cloak their real object, of discovering the camp and learning what they could about the English forces and situation. He remarked that ambassadors did not skulk for

two days in the neighborhood of the camp to which they bore a message. Nevertheless, he implied, according to the French version of his Journal, that he deemed the summons so insolent that had he received it openly from two men he would hardly have allowed them to return. It ordered all English to withdraw from the domain of the king of France, and threatened compulsion. Before exhibiting this, Jumonville, according to his orders, was to send back couriers, with all speed, to Fort Duquesne, — probably so that Contrecoeur, the commandant, could send as large a force as might be needed. French deserters told Washington that the party came as spies, and were to show the summons only if threatened by a superior force. The accounts in French histories are founded on a letter written by M. de Contrecoeur to the governor of Canada, June 2d, 1754, in which he says: —

“A Canadian belonging to the party, named Mouceau, made his escape, who relates that they had built cabins in a low bottom, where they lay during a heavy rain. At seven o'clock in the morning they saw themselves encircled on one side by the English, and by savages on the other. Two discharges of musketry were fired upon them by the English, but none by the savages. M. de Jumonville called to them by an interpreter to desist, as he had something to say to them. The firing ceased. M. de Jumonville caused the summons to be read which I had sent, admonishing them

to retire, a copy of which I have the honor to enclose. Whilst this was reading, the said Mouceau saw the French gathered close around M. de Jumonville, in the midst of the English and the savages. At that time Mouceau escaped through the woods, making his way hither partly by land, and partly in a small canoe on the river Monongahela. . . .

"The savages who were present say that M. de Jumonville was killed by a musket-shot in the head, while he was listening to the reading of the summons, and that the English would immediately have destroyed the whole party, if the savages had not rushed in before them and prevented their attempt."

This is certainly testimony of little weight, and Washington wrote in the *Journal*, of which we have only the French version:—

"They pretend they called to us as soon as they had discovered us. It is absolutely false, for I was then marching at the head of the company, and can positively affirm that as soon as they saw us they ran to their arms, without calling ; as I must have heard them had they so done."

A French officer who was in the fight left a memoir saying that Jumonville tried to show the letter only when he found himself the weaker party. The spirit in which Washington acted, however, must be judged partly in the light of his letters to Dinwiddie, in which he says that the Half-King was sure the French had bad hearts, and that, if the English were so foolish as

to let them go, he would never assist them again. Besides, Washington goes on, with a spirit not yet as remarkable for fairness as it later became, to have lost La Force, who was among the prisoners, would have been worse than to have let fifty other men escape, as his active spirit and command of the Indian tongue made him of great use to the French in securing savage allies. Washington also puts forth the remarkable opinion that in strict justice the prisoners ought to be hanged as spies of the worst sort. At this period he is impetuous, pugnacious, slightly tricky, and not as conscientious as he became with years and prominence.

The colonel just now begins to show that his young blood responds to his exploits, and that he has no unreasonable modesty. While preparing for the next encounter, he writes Dinwiddie that he has a constitution hardy enough to undergo the most severe trials, "and, I flatter myself, resolution to face what any man durst, as shall be proved when it comes to the test, which I believe we are on the borders of." He bitterly objects to his treatment, from salary down to food, as "my services, so far as I have knowledge, will equal those of the best officer." However, despite his complaints, he has no notion of yielding. "Nothing but very unequal numbers shall engage me to submit or retreat." Moreover, he promises

to urge contentment on the other officers, as far as he can "play the hypocrite." These complaints are vivaciously mixed in with statements that he expects every hour to be attacked by much larger numbers; that he can promise not to be surprised, "let them come at what hour they will"; that this is all he can promise, although he hopes to deserve more. In a postscript he begs his honor's favor for Captain Vanbraam, who has acted, he says, extremely well.

Washington also immediately wrote to his brother an account of his "most signal victory." This was on the 31st, and he said that he expected every hour to be attacked by a superior force, "but if they forbear one day longer we shall be ready for them," as he expected to have a fort ready, and forty reënforcements from Colonel Fry, which "will enable us to exert our noble courage with spirit."

Horace Walpole has this famous passage in his "Memoirs of George the Second":—

"In the express which Major Washington despatched on his preceding little victory (the skirmish with Jumonville) he concluded with these words: 'I heard the bullets whistle, and, believe me, there is something charming in the sound.' On hearing of this the king said sensibly, 'he would not say so if he had been used to hear many.' However, this brave braggart learned to blush for his rhodomontade, and, desiring to serve General Braddock as aide-de-camp, acquitted himself nobly."

Washington later replied to inquiry that, if he ever used these words, it was when he was very young. Yet what is there to be ashamed of in a simple statement of the mere truth? Exhilaration in the face of personal danger was a feeling that he never outgrew, although he learned enough about the hearts of men to be less open in its expression. To the governor he wrote:—

“If the whole Detach’t of the French behaved with no more Resolution than this chosen Party did, I flatter myself we shall have no g’t trouble in driving them to the d—— Montreal. Tho’ I took forty Men under my com’d when I marched out, yet the darkness of the night was so great that by wandering a little from the main body 7 were lost, and but 33 ingag’d. There was also but 7 Indians with arms, two of which were Boys,—one Dinwiddie, your Honor’s God Son, who behav’d well in action. There were 5 or 6 other Indians, who served to knock the poor, unhappy wounded in the head and bereiv’d them of their scalps. So that we had but 40 men, with which we tried and took 32 or 3 men, besides others who may have escaped. One we have certain acc’t did.

“We have just finish’d a small pallisado’d Fort, in which, with my small numbers, I shall not fear the attack of 500 men.”

Mrs. John Carlyle wrote to him,¹ on June 17th, thus:—

¹ See “Letters to Washington,” edited by S. M. Hamilton, Vol. I., p. 9. I have found this new collection very valuable in supplementing the one made by Mr. Sparks, and have to thank the Colonial Dames for advance sheets, as well as for permission to quote from the published volumes.

“Those pleasing reflections on the hours past ought to be banished out of your thoughts. You have now a nobler prospect, that of preserving your country from the insults of an enemy; and as God has blessed your first attempt, hope he may continue his blessing, and on your return who knows but fortune may have reserved you for some unknown She that may recompense you for all the trials past.”

The fort, reënforcements having arrived, contained about three hundred men, all now under Washington's immediate command, Colonel Fry having died. Various Indians joined them, among them the Queen Aliquippa.

“Queen Aliquippa desired that her son who is really a great warrior, might be taken into council, as he was declining and unfit for business, and that he should have an English name given him. I therefore called the Indians together by the advice of the Half-King, presented one of the medals, and desired him to wear it in remembrance of his great father, the King of England, and called him by the name of Colonel Fairfax, which he was told signified the first of the council. This gave him great pleasure. I was also informed, that an English name would please the Half-King, which made me presume to give him that of your Honor, and call him Dinwiddie; interpreted in their language, the head of all. I am, &c.”

To some distinguished Delawares Washington ventured the politic if hardly veracious statement that he had come to put them in possession of the land which the French had taken from them. On

June 21st he held a council, at which he addressed the Delawares: —

“Brethren, By your open and Generous, Conduct on this Occasion, You have made yourselves dearer to us than ever; we return You our Thanks, that you did not go to Venango, when the French first invited You there; their treating You in such a childish Manner, as we perceive they do, raises in us a just and strong Resentment. They call You their Children, and speak to You, as if You in reality were Children, and had no more Understanding than such. Weigh well, my Brethren, and compare all their Discourse, and You will find that all it tends to, is to tell You, I am going to open your Eyes, to unstop your Ears, and such words, to no Purpose, and only proper to amuse Children. You also observe Brethren that if they deliver a Speech, or make a Promise, and confirm it by a Belt, they imagine it binds them no longer than they think it consistent with their Interest to stand to it. They have given one Example of it; and I will make You observe it, in the Jump which they say they have made over the Boundaries, which you had set them; which ought to stir You up my Brethren to just Anger, and lead you to embrace the favorable Opportunity that We offer You, as we are come at Your Request, to assist You and by Means of which, You may make them Jump back again, with more Speed than they advanced.”

Immediately after his account of this speech he remarks: —

“After this, the Council broke up, and those treacherous Devils, who had been sent by the French as Spies, returned though not without some Tale ready prepared

to amuse the French, which may be of Service to make our own Designs succeed."

And soon after :—

"As those Indians, who were Spies sent by the French, were very inquisitive, and asked us many Questions, to know by what Way we proposed to go to the Fort, and what Time we expected to arrive there ; I left off working any further at the Road, and told them as we intended to keep on across the Woods as far as the Fort, falling the Trees, &c. that we were waiting here for the Reinforcement which was coming to us, our Artillery, and our Waggon to accompany us there ; but, as soon as they were gone, I set about marking out and clearing a Road towards Red Stone."

Surely, not a colorless or inhuman individual this, but one fully willing to fight any devil with his own weapons. In spite, however, of all his blandishments, on this very day the Delawares, the Half-King, and all the other Indians deserted him, and he sent menaces and wampum in a vain attempt to get them back.

Washington was reënforced by a company from South Carolina under Captain Mackaye, but as that officer held a King's commission, and therefore would not take even the parole and countersign from Washington, and as his soldiers, refusing to work without extra pay, merely demoralized the Virginians, Washington left them as a guard at the intrenchments at Great Meadows, which he called Fort Necessity, while he himself proceeded

to cut a road, for carriages and artillery, through a gorge in the mountains, to Gist's settlement, thirteen miles away. This task occupied two weeks. News of great reënforcements at Fort Duquesne led Washington to call Mackaye forward again. After some hesitation, it was decided to retreat. The horses were weak and the men overworked. Washington gave up his horse to carry public stores, and paid soldiers to take his baggage. When, in two days, they reached Great Meadows, they were too weary to continue the retreat. Sending expresses to hurry on the two independent companies that had arrived at Alexandria twenty days before, and ought by this time to have been at Will's Creek, they began to strengthen the fortification with logs. The fort was a simple square enclosure, partly surrounded by a trench, said by a French writer to have been in places only knee deep. There was an exterior embankment, which seems to have been made like a rifle pit, with a ditch inside. The glade in which the fort stood was covered with bushes and long grass, and hills began to rise about one hundred and fifty yards from the fort on one side, and one hundred yards on the other. The high ground on one side came to within about sixty yards, and to this point the enemy could advance under the protection of trees.

The approaching French were reported to be

nine hundred strong, besides Indians. On the morning of July 3d a wounded sentry gave an alarm. Soon after, the enemy appeared at the edge of the wood, firing and yelling, at the distance of six hundred yards. Washington had drawn up his men outside the fort, hoping for a direct attack, and he now gave no order to return to the fortifications, as the distant shooting did no harm. Seeing, however, soon after, that the French were making their way around to the nearest part of the woods, a move which was what he had hoped to avoid, he withdrew his men into the fort. There, soaked in the heavy rain, they received a constant cross-fire from the French and Indians, hidden in the trees, on both sides of the fort. The steady downpour turned the embankment into mud. Men in the ditch on the outwork stood to the knee in water. The swivels mounted on the rampart were almost silenced, so poorly protected were the gunners. The soldiers were half starved. They had only two screw rods to clean all their guns, and at times it was almost too wet for either side to fire, but toward evening the fighting was sharp again. About eight o'clock the French called out to propose a parley. Washington, fearing a spy, declined. When the French sent again and invited him to send an officer to them, he decided to comply. Of the two men who spoke French one was wounded, and the other was the Vanbraam of

whom Washington thought so well. This man was sent, and, after a long absence, returned, with the terms of capitulation suggested by Villiers, the French commander. Vanbraam himself was able to make out the words only because he had heard the paper read by the French officer, and Stephen says, that as there was no opportunity to make a written translation, they were "obliged to take the sense of them from his mouth," implying that perhaps he gave mere summaries of some clauses. The English objected to certain terms. The French were willing to change them, an agreement was reached, and the articles signed about midnight. The English marched out in the early morning, with the honors of war, their drums beating, carrying one of their swivels, and with the promise of protection from the Indians, having on their part promised to return to Fort Duquesne the prisoners taken in the preceding scrimmage. They left two hostages, of whom Vanbraam was one. Twelve Virginians remained on the field, dead, and forty-three wounded were carried away. Mackaye's losses are not known. The French commander reported his killed and wounded as twenty. The total number of the French forces is unknown, but was probably twice as large as the English. The cattle and horses of the defeated had all been killed, and as they had to carry the wounded on their backs they

were compelled to leave most of the baggage. Worn out with fatigue they soon encamped, to wait for wagons. The Indians plundered them, threatened an attack, knocked to pieces their medicine chest, and murdered and scalped two of the wounded. The officers with difficulty prevented a panic. They finally left the wounded with a guard, and marched the fifty-two miles across the Alleghanies to Will's Creek.

The articles signed under such confusing conditions led to some misapprehensions, the most notable of which concerned article 7, in which the English promised to return the prisoners taken "*dans l'assassinat du Sieur de Jumonville.*" Villiers, in his report to his government, lays special stress on having compelled the English to confess to the "assassination," but his report is throughout ludicrously inaccurate, and the testimony is overwhelming that Vanbraam never used the word "assassination," but spoke of the death or loss of Jumonville. Washington, Mackaye, and Stephen agree in this. Vanbraam was charged with treachery, but Washington believed in his innocence, which, indeed, there is not the smallest reason to doubt, and befriended him after his return from captivity. The only real disgrace involved was Dinwiddie's refusal to live up to this seventh clause, retaining his prisoners on a pretext. In allusion to one clause, which later also

caused allegations of bad faith, because it was not clearly understood, or because it was misrepresented by the French, Horace Walpole wrote: "The French have tied up the hands of an excellent fanfaron, a Major Washington, whom they took and engaged not to serve for a year." Washington and all the officers, — except two, Vanbraam, on account of his blunder, and the Major of the regiment, Muse, who was charged with cowardice, — received a vote of thanks from the house of Burgesses. One of the hostages, Captain Stobo, a Scotchman, was held for years at Quebec. One notable spring he escaped, and, joining a British army, pointed out to General Wolfe a path up a cliff, in a little cove called Anse de Foulon.

Washington's friend, the Half-King, died during the autumn following the skirmish which began so long a struggle, not, however, without having in his pique given to an interpreter some sentences in which possibly some truth is mixed with much picturesque foolishness: that Washington "lay at one place from one full moon to the other and made no fortifications at all, but that little thing upon the Meadow, where he thought the French would come up to him in open field; that had he taken the Half-King's advice and made such fortifications as the Half-King advised him to make he would certainly have beat the French off; that

the French had acted as great cowards, and the English as fools in that engagement; that he (the Half-King) had carried off his wife and children; so did other Indians before the battle begun, because Colonel Washington would never listen to them, but was always driving them on to fight by his directions."

CHAPTER IV

BRADDOCK'S DEFEAT

"It is not in Indian wars that heroes are celebrated, but it is there they are formed." — FISHER AMES.

GOVERNOR DINWIDDIE, full of zeal and military ignorance, was eager for the impossible. Early in August Washington received a letter from him, stating that the Council, considering the present state of the English forces and the possibility that the French would be reënforced in the spring, had determined that their forces should march immediately over the Alleghany Mountains, and either take Fort Duquesne or build a fort in a suitable place. Washington was ordered to fill his regiment up to three hundred men and then march to Will's Creek. His comment (not made in these words to the governor, however), was that to repair to Will's Creek with the regiment, under the present circumstances, was as impracticable as it would be to take Fort Duquesne, which, with their present means, would be impossible. He pointed out to his friend, William Fairfax, that "considering the present state of our forces" ought to have led to exactly the opposite conclusion

from the one reached on that ground by the governor and council. Before they could get properly started, the season would be at hand when horses could not travel over the mountains, on account of snow, want of forage, and slipperiness, and when the men, unused to the exposure, could not live in tents.

The men were impressed by the former vain attempt, in a better season of the year, to take possession of the fork of the Allegheny and Monongahela. The knowledge that the same effort was to be repeated raised a general clamor, and six deserted the first night, August 10th. Not a man in the regiment owned a blanket, there was not sufficient ammunition, owing to a quarrel between the governor and his council, and there were no presents to secure Indians. The men, as Washington described them to Dinwiddie, were naked, and could not even get a hat. On August 19th, while the officers were at church, twenty-five soldiers collected, and were about to desert, when they were discovered and imprisoned. Scarcely a night passed without some desertion. Washington, who liked to use authority, was eager to make an example of some of them, but the uncertainty of the laws made him hesitate.

Such difficulties filled the summer. There was a rumor that Major Muse, he who was charged with cowardice, had challenged Washington to

fight, and a French friend of Washington's, obviously an admirer, was asked about the truth of it.

"My answer was no other but that he should rather choose to go to hell than doing of it, for had he had such thing declared, that was his sure road."

In October the Assembly granted £20,000, and the governor received £10,000 sterling from England, with the promise of as much more. He thereupon resolved to enlarge his army to ten companies, of one hundred men each, with no officer in the Virginia regiment above the rank of captain. As all precedence of rank was denied to the colonial officers, in comparison with the bearers of royal commissions, Washington, always keenly interested in what military notions called his honor, immediately resigned.

Governor Sharpe, of Maryland, who was now commander-in-chief of all the forces engaged against the French, was anxious to get Washington back into the army. His second in command, Colonel Fitzhugh, wrote that everything would be done to make him happy and prevent interference, but Washington replied:—

"If you think me capable of holding a commission, that has neither rank or emolument annexed to it, you must entertain a very contemptible opinion of my weakness, and believe me to be more empty than the commission itself. . . .

"I shall have the consolation of knowing, that I have

opened the way, when the smallness of our numbers exposed us to the attacks of a superior enemy ; that I have hitherto stood the heat and brunt of the day, and escaped untouched in time of extreme danger ; and that I have the thanks of my country for the services I have rendered it. . . .

“ It was to obey the call of honor, and the advice of my friends, I declined it, and not to gratify any desire I had to leave the military line. My inclinations are strongly bent to arms.”

The irate young officer even went so far as to hint that the new arrangement was an underhanded effort to do him injustice. In spite of his dissatisfaction he gave general publicity to his desire to serve, if an opportunity should arise to do so without injury to his pride.

General Braddock, the new commander-in-chief, landed in Virginia, with two regiments of the British army, supplies, and artillery, on February 20th, 1755, and soon received, from the anxious youth at Mount Vernon, a congratulatory letter on his safe arrival, a document not without a tinge of flattery. On March 2d he offered Washington the position of aide-de-camp, which removed all his objections and gave him the longed-for privilege of being in the approaching conflict, and leaving the “ life of retirement ” into which he alleged that he was just entering.

His joining the army was somewhat delayed, owing partly to the alarm of his mother, who

came to Mount Vernon to protest, partly to the confusion of affairs at the family seat, of which he was now the official head. He sent a map, and promised to join the army as soon as possible. To the Speaker of the House of Delegates in Virginia he wrote: "The sole motive, which invites me to the field, is the laudable desire of serving my country, and not the gratification of any ambitious or lucrative plans."

He said he was more unreserved to this friend than he would be to the world, "whose censures and criticisms often place good designs in a bad light." This sensitiveness to the world's comments, which later became so acute, thus began early. He joined Braddock at Frederickstown, much displeased, so strong was the local feeling, that the army should pass through Maryland, when it might have passed through Virginia. From the beginning his relations were pleasant with the General, of whom he wrote to his brother:—

"I hope to please without ceremonious *attentions* or difficulty; for I may add, it cannot be done *with them*, as he uses and requires less ceremony than you can easily conceive."

Braddock had the distinction of despising all Colonials except Franklin and Washington. Of this picturesque individual Franklin said:—

"This general was, I think, a brave man, and might probably have made a good figure in some European

war. But he had too much self-confidence ; too high an opinion of the validity of regular troops ; too mean a one of both Americans and Indians."

In his *Life of Chatham*, the Rev. Francis Thackeray says :—

"General Braddock, a stranger certainly to fear, but obstinate in the extreme, with no other notions of war than the punctilious enforcement of military discipline, was sent to oppose the wild attacks and ambuscades of the Indians. A fencing master might, with equal prudence, be sent to attack a tiger."

Although overbearing, it is doubtful if Braddock was overconfident. George Anne Bellamy, the actress, whom he visited the night before he left England for America, says in her "Apology":—

"Before we parted the General told me that he should never see me more ; for he was going with a handful of men to conquer whole nations ; and to do this they must cut their way through unknown woods. He produced a map of the country, saying at the same time, 'Dear Pop, we are sent like sacrifices to the altar.'"

When the divisions of the army were assembled at Will's Creek, Braddock was enraged at not finding the horses and wagons for which he had contracted. He emerged from his difficulty only through the efficiency of Benjamin Franklin, who, as postmaster-general of the provinces, visited the commander to see about the mail, realized what a hopeless situation he was in, and agreed to furnish

one hundred and fifty wagons and the needed number of horses. He then went among the farmers of Pennsylvania and in two weeks procured the vehicles and animals, on his own personal security, a deed which was described by General Braddock as "the only instance of address or integrity which he had seen in the provinces."

Washington's frame of mind was sanguine.

"As to any danger from the enemy, I look upon it as trifling, for I believe the French will be obliged to exert their utmost force to repel the attacks to the northward."

His practical attitude is shown in this same letter:—

"I have now a good opportunity, and shall not neglect it, of forming an acquaintance, which may be serviceable hereafter, if I find it worth while to push my fortune in the military line."

He and the General argued, but always amicably. The conditions which angered Braddock also aroused the ire of Washington. "You may with (almost) equal success attempt to raise the *dead* as the force of this country." He thought the Pennsylvanians ought to be "chastised for their insensibility to danger, and disregard of their Sovereign's expectation." Nevertheless, he thus severely judged Braddock:—

“The General, by frequent breaches of contract, has lost all patience; and, for want of that temper and moderation, which should be used by a man of *sense* upon these occasions, will, I fear, represent us in a light we little deserve; for, instead of blaming the individuals, as he ought, he charges all his disappointments to publick supineness, and looks upon the country, I believe, as void of honor and honesty. We have frequent disputes on this head, which are maintained with warmth on both sides, especially on his, who is incapable of arguing without, or giving up any point he asserts, let it be ever so incompatible with reason or common sense.”

The delay gave Washington time to write letters, in which some details of his character appear. To his brother he wrote: “I have conceived a good opinion of the horse Gist; therefore, I hope you will not let *him* want for proper care and good usage”; and, “I hope you will have frequent opportunities to particularize the state of my affairs, which will administer much satisfaction to a person in my situation.” This delight in the business details of his life never left him, in war or peace. To the same brother he wrote:—

“I should be glad to hear that you live in perfect harmony and good fellowship with the family at Belvoir, as it is in their power to be very serviceable upon many occasions to us, as young beginners.”

A more definite ambition also existed in his mind:—

"As I understand the County of Fairfax is to be divided, and that Mr. Alexander intends to decline serving it. I should be glad if you could come at Colo. Fairfax's intentions, and let me know whether he purposes to offer himself as a candidate. If he does not, I should be glad to take a poll, if I thought my chance tolerably good. . . .

"The Revd. Mr. Green's and Captain McCarty's interests in this matter would be of consequence, and I should be glad if you could *sound* their pulse upon that occasion. Conduct the whole till you are satisfied of the sentiments of those I have mentioned, with an air of indifference and unconcern; after that, you may regulate your conduct accordingly to circumstances."

Washington's cheerful and confident state of mind about the war was matched by the public, which subscribed in advance for a celebration of Braddock's victory, while Benjamin Franklin characteristically stated that he preferred to wait until that victory was won. Washington's buoyancy was somewhat lowered when, early in June, reports came from Pennsylvania that nine hundred men had passed Oswego to reënforce the French on the Ohio, "so that from these accounts we have reason to believe that we shall have more to do than to go up the hills and come down." At the same time he was far from pleased with a certain appointment, of which he remarked, showing a not infrequent tendency to sarcasm: —

"General Innes has accepted of a Commission to be Governour of Fort Cumberland, where he is to reside;

and will shortly receive another to be hangman, or something of that kind, and for which he is equally qualified."

During his stay in camp he gave one of the earliest glimpses of the character of his famous but querulous mother:—

"Hon'd Madam," he wrote, "I was favored with your letter by Mr. Dick, and am sorry it is not in my power to provide you with a Dutch servant, or the butter, agreeably to your desire. We are quite out of the part of the country where either is to be had, there being few or no inhabitants where we now lie encamped, and butter cannot be had here to supply the wants of the army." "I hope," he also says, "you will spend the chief part of your time at Mount Vernon, as you have proposed to do, where I am certain every thing will be ordered as much to your satisfaction as possible, in the situation we are in there."

He later grew less patient with her constant complaints. Her principal idea about George's being in the army seems to have been the extra inconvenience it caused her, and much of her talk was in line with these sentences in one of her letters:—

"I am borrowing a little Cornn — no Cornn in the Cornn house. I never lived soe poore in my life."

Doubtless she deserved her reputation for a strong executive character, but toward the

end of her life she grew more and more unreasonable.

On the 14th, as the army was setting out from George's Creek, Washington was seized with a violent fever and pains in the head, which made it almost impossible for him to sit on a horse. He proceeded in a covered wagon, until the jolting distressed him, when he was left on the road with a guard, after extracting a promise that he should be brought to the front before they reached the French fort. This promise and the doctor's threats were, he says, the sole causes of his consent to wait.

The difficulties of the passage across the rough mountain roads made it necessary to decide whether to go very slowly or to leave behind one division of the army with the artillery and heavy baggage. Washington, who had already given up his best horse to encourage a retrenchment of the baggage, was consulted, apparently, by General Braddock, and he, in the warmest language at his command, urged a forward movement, even if it must be made with a "small but chosen band, and with such artillery and light stores as were absolutely necessary."

Washington was soon with the rear division. On the 8th of July, riding in a covered wagon, he overtook the advance division at the mouth of the Youghiogheny River, fifteen miles from Fort Du-

quesne, and the next morning he attended Braddock on horseback, although "very weak and low," as he put it.

On account of the steepness of the ground on the north side of the Monongahela, which prevented the army from marching in that direction, it was necessary to ford the river twice, and march a part of the way on the south side. The Virginia troops did not make a good impression on the regulars. Robert Orme, a favorite of Braddock, said of them: "Their languid, spiritless, and unsoldierlike appearance, considered with the lowness and ignorance of most of their officers, gave little hopes of their future good behaviour."

They marched until about noon, when they were within ten miles of Fort Duquesne. At this point they crossed the river again, to the north bank, where their road lay through a level plain at the north end of which began a gradual ascent soon leading to hills of some height, and thence through an uneven country covered with trees. The advance party consisted of three hundred men under Colonel Gage, who later played so conspicuous a rôle in Washington's life, and who was thus gaining experience in the same encounters that did so much to prepare the colonies for their conflict with Great Britain. The advance division was followed immediately by another party of two hundred. Then came Braddock, with the

main body, artillery, and baggage. All had crossed the river, and the advance body was proceeding cheerfully up the hill, on two sides of which ran ravines eight or ten feet deep, covered with trees and long grass. Along the level ground between these ravines the army came, as if on parade. General Braddock had not encumbered himself with scouts. His army made a lovely sight, which seemed to him enough. He despised Indians, Colonists, and the whole principle of irregular warfare. When one hundred friendly Indians joined him on the march, he treated them so coldly, in spite of Washington's protests, that they had all fallen away. On the very night preceding this dress parade between the ravines they came back and renewed their offers, and the sentinel before Braddock's tent, as he afterward told Mr. Sparks, heard a conversation in which Washington urged the superiority of Indians as scouts, which he had so often urged before, — and was met only by the General's loyalty to regular troops and conventional methods. It is said that even the common soldiers from Virginia had warned their regular companions, and possibly made them nervous.

After the first division of the British had proceeded well into the field between the ravines, still seeing and hearing no enemy, they received a volley of musket balls in their faces. "We

could only tell where the enemy were by the smoke of their muskets," said one of the soldiers.

Nevertheless the British replied with a volley which killed the French commander, and was so heavy that the Indians, thinking it came from artillery, were about to retreat, when Dumas, on whom the command devolved, rallied them. He sent them, under French officers, around to attack the right flank, while he held the front. The British now received another rain of bullets on the side, the woods rang about them with savage yells, and they saw only smoke, with the occasional form of an Indian venturing from behind a tree to secure a scalp.

The Virginians, familiar with such sights and sounds, dropped on the ground and rushed behind trees. The panic-stricken regulars tried to imitate them. Braddock, who had immediately come up, was furious, and as daring as he was angry. Riding about the field, he forced the Virginians and the regulars back into line, for no sane purpose, apparently, as there was no bayonet charge ordered and no use made of the artillery. They were to keep ranks merely because that was the regular thing to do. Four horses were shot under the intrepid commander while he was engaged in this work of destroying his own army, and he mounted a fifth.

All his aides were shot down but one. George

Washington, hardly well enough to sit in his saddle, rode about the field, delivering, and endeavoring to enforce, the orders of his deluded superior. His request that the Virginians be allowed to fight in their own way was rejected. He could only obey. Six feet two inches in height, standing out in the clear light, as he wheeled his horse hither and thither, the handsome officer of twenty-three made a noble target. Almost every officer had fallen. Washington jumped from two horses, as they dropped before the unseen enemy's bullets, and leaped upon a third. Four bullets tore his clothes. There was perhaps essential truth in the eloquence with which the Indian chief later described him :¹ —

“It was on the day, when the white man's blood mixed with the streams of our forest, that I first beheld this chief ; I called to my young men and said, mark yon tall and daring warrior? He is not of the red-coat tribe — he hath an Indian's wisdom, and his warriors fight as we do — himself is alone exposed. Quick, let your aim be certain, and he dies. Our rifles were levelled, rifles which but for him knew not how to miss — 'twas all in vain, a power mightier far than we shielded him from harm. He can not die in battle.”

It was a hopeless struggle. Braddock dropped. What was left of the army fled. The dead and wounded were about seven hundred and fifty, half

¹ Custis, “Reminiscences,” 303.

the army, almost equal in numbers to the enemy's whole force.

Washington wrote to his mother from Fort Cumberland, July 18th:—

“The Virginia troops showed a good deal of bravery, and were nearly all killed. . . . The dastardly behavior of those they call regulars exposed all others, that were inclined to do their duty, to almost certain death; and at last, in despite of all the efforts of the officers to the contrary, they ran as sheep pursued by wolves, and it was impossible to rally them.”

He wrote to Dinwiddie:—

“The poor Virginians behaved like men, and died like soldiers. . . . It is imagined (I believe with great justice, too) that two thirds of both killed and wounded received their shots from our own cowardly dogs of soldiers, who gathered themselves into a body, contrary to orders, ten and twelve deep, would then level, fire, and shoot down the men before them.”

It is said that during Braddock's last hours he could not endure the sight of a redcoat, but murmured praises of “the blues,” or Virginians, and said he hoped he should live to reward them. The army moved forward on the 13th, and that night Braddock died. To protect his body from the Indians he was buried in the road, about a mile from Fort Necessity. On the 17th, the sick and wounded reached Fort Cumberland, and on the next day Washington wrote to Augustine: “As I have heard, since my arrival at this place,

a circumstantial account of my death and dying speech, I take the earliest opportunity of contradicting the first, and of assuring you that I have, as yet, not composed the latter." He reached Mount Vernon July 26th, quite exhausted. His mother immediately visited him and tried to induce him to give up military life. Other friends were more impressed with his glory. William Fairfax, writing from Belvoir, the day of Washington's arrival at Mount Vernon, acknowledged an invitation to that seat, and said that if a Saturday night's rest was not sufficient to get him to Belvoir the next day, "the ladies will try to get horses to equip one chair or attempt their strength on foot to salute you, so desirous are they with loving speed to have an ocular demonstration of your being the same identical gentleman that lately departed to defend his country's cause."

To this letter the following was added in the handwriting of Sally Fairfax: —

"DEAR SIR: — After thanking Heaven for your safe return I must accuse you of great unkindness in refusing us the pleasure of seeing you this night. I do assure you nothing but our being satisfied that our company would be disagreeable should prevent us from trying if our Legs would not carry us to Mount Vernon this night, but if you will not come to us to-morrow morning very early we shall be at Mount Vernon.

"S. Fairfax.

"Ann Spearing.

"Eliz'th Dent."

The Rev. Samuel Davies, preaching in August to a company from Hanover County, spoke of "that heroic youth, Colonel Washington, whom I cannot but hope Providence has hitherto preserved in so signal a manner for some important service to his country."

The next month Joseph Ball wrote to Washington from England:—

"GOOD COUZ:—

"It is a sensible pleasure to me to hear that you have behaved yourself with such a martial spirit in all your engagements with the French nigh Ohio. Go on as you have begun, and God prosper you.

"We have heard of General Braddock's defeat. Everybody blames his rash conduct.

"Everybody commends the courage of the Virginia and Carolina men."

The affair at Duquesne was more than a local triumph for Virginia over the supercilious regulars from Great Britain. Such fighting gave many Virginians training for greater deeds, and the incident made a long step forward in the career of Washington, a link in the chain which led the second Congress to put him at the head of the Continental armies in 1775.

CHAPTER V

THE VIRGINIA COMMANDER

"I am sensible such a Medley of undisciplined Militia must create you various trouble, but having Cæsar's Commentaries and perhaps Quintus Curtius, you have therein read of greater Fatigues, Murmurings, Mutinys, and Defections than will probably come to your Share, tho' if any of those Casualtys should interrupt your Quiet, I doubt not but you would bear them with equal Magnanimity." — COL. WILLIAM FAIRFAX, to Washington.

As Virginia, proud of her share in Braddock's expedition, immediately decided to increase her forces, talk about Washington as commander was inevitable. The governor was supposed to favor another. Washington, although in truth he snuffed the battle from afar, was proudly determined to take the post, if at all, on his own terms.

That he was determined to remain in the field, if he could do so on a satisfactory footing, is shown by this letter to his mother: —

"MOUNT VERNON, 14 August, 1755.

"HONORED MADAM,

"If it is in my power to avoid going to the Ohio again, I shall; but if the command is pressed upon me by the general *voice* of the country, and offered upon such terms as cannot be objected against, it would reflect dishonor upon me to refuse; and *that*, I am sure, must

or *ought* to give you greater uneasiness than my going in an honorable command, for upon no other terms I will accept of it. At present I have no proposals made to me, nor have I any advice of such an intention, except from private hands."

One thing in particular he should insist upon, which youth and inexperience had made him overlook before, — a voice in the appointment of subordinates; for, he explained with some eloquence, when misfortunes happen through lower officers, mankind are likely "to level their vindictive censures against the chief." He was the more determined to have all the conditions right before he would accept, because the leader in the present crisis could hardly gain honor and was extremely likely to lose what reputation he might have.

"I am very apprehensive I should lose what at present constitutes the chief part of my happiness, *i.e.*, the esteem and notice which the country has been pleased to honor me with."

The public voice was with him, and more than he asked was granted. Dinwiddie wrote to Sir Thomas Pelham, September 6th, 1755:—

"And as I was sensible the Companies of Rangers were not sufficient to protect our frontiers in case of an invasion from the enemy, I have therefore granted to raise 16 companies to augment our forces and 1000 men, and have them incorporated into a regiment.

"The command thereof is given to Colonel George Washington, who was one of General Braddock's aid-

de-camps, and I think a man of great merit and resolution. . . . And I am convinced that if General Braddock had survived he would have recommended Mr. Washington to the royal favour."

Dinwiddie also wrote to General James Abercrombie on May 28th, 1756:—

"General Braddock had so high an esteem for his merit that he made him one of his aid-de-camps, and if he had survived I believe he would have provided handsomely for him in the Regulars. He is a person much beloved here and has gone through many hardships in the service, and I really think he has great merit, and believe he can raise more men here than any one present that I know."

Whether merely because he was a provincial, or from the want of family influence pointed out by his uncle, Washington never received a royal commission.

Immediately after his appointment, he wrote to a friend that he was unequal to the task, which had assumed an importance for which his experience was insufficient,—a phrase which, like many another expression of his methodical mind, had its echo on a larger stage twenty years later.

He began along lines with which he was already familiar. Indians, now as always, seemed to him of the highest importance. He wrote to Montour his belief that his presence among the Indians "would animate their just indignation to do some-

thing noble," and promised, now that he was commander, that they should be treated as "brothers of our great King beyond the waters."

To Dinwiddie he wrote:—

"I despatched an express immediately upon my arrival at this place with a copy of the enclosed to Andrew Montour, who I heard was at a place called Long Island, with three hundred Indians, to see if he would engage him and them to join us. The letter savours a little of flattery."

To induce necessary work, Washington had to use force on his refractory fellow-citizens, for which in return they promised to blow his brains out. The soldiers, too, were insolent, and looked upon discipline as insult, fit only for negroes; their officers were indolent; and the youth who had been placed over them begged earnestly for laws permitting greater severity. Several of his officers were gone recruiting "six weeks or two months without getting a man, spending their time in all the gayety of pleasureable mirth"; and some of them were so violent as to set a whole neighborhood against enlistment. Danger hovered always about the long and imperfectly protected frontier, and when there were no actual misfortunes rumors took their place. Two terrified messengers came on successive days, the second saying that the Indians were within four miles of the headquarters at Winchester, and that

he had heard the shrieks of the unhappy wretches whom they murdered on their march. Washington collected what force he could, — about forty in all, — and hurried to the scene, where he found three drunken soldiers “carousing, firing their pistols, and uttering the most unheard of imprecations.”

A mulatto and a negro hunting cattle were enough to start wild reports in the minds of the now panic-stricken inhabitants, who could hardly be expected to feel safe along a frontier of three hundred and fifty miles. Washington urged his officers to train the men for bush-fighting particularly, although he also told them to read treatises, Bland’s among them, on the art of war. He promised them the strictest discipline, combined with the severest justice, no partiality, and no discrimination.

To Lieutenant Colonel Stephen he wrote : —

“Things not yet being rightly settled for punishing deserters according to their crimes, you must go on in the old way of *‘whipping stoutly.’*”

Benjamin Franklin said that Washington could get assistance from Pennsylvania sooner than any other person in America — this when he was twenty-three.

These serious concerns were, in the middle of the winter, varied by a trip which he made to Boston, to see the commander-in-chief of all the

British forces in America, to settle whether he should resign, or be given express power over lower officers holding royal commissions, one of whom had been making himself unbearable. Washington went over the five hundred miles on horseback with two companions. He started February 4th, 1756, and stopped on the way at Philadelphia, where he visited the governor, and at New York, where he indulged his natural propensities by falling in love with Miss Mary Philipse. His accounts in New York include an item for "treating ladies," apparently four of them, to see a "piece of mechanism, called the Microcosm, or, the world in Miniature," and shortly after another item for "treating ladies" to the "Microcosm" again. His losses at cards in New York amounted to 8s. He then went through New London, Newport, and Providence, and spent ten days in Boston, where he obtained a decision in his favor from the commander, who received him favorably, and confided in him his plans for the next campaign against the French. His losses at cards here amounted to £5 1s. 2½d. Of course addiction to cards to this degree had no element of gambling, but in spite of its being an almost universal fashion, it did show a certain vacancy of intellectual interest, hinted later by John Armstrong, who wrote to him:—

“but here permit a Single remark flowing from Old friendship, and it shall be on the infatuating Game of Card-playing, of which on thirty years observation I am not able to say so much good as a witty person once did of what he Censur'd as a Culpable & extravagant piece of Dress *that it cover'd a multitude of Sins*; but that game, always unfriendly to Society, turns conversation out of Doors, and curtails our opportunities to mutual good. I can easily presume on your good nature to forgive this piece of unfashionable freedom.”

Washington paid the chambermaid £1 7s. 6d. and spent over £95 on a tailor, and over £94 on silver lace. He stopped at New York on his way back, and when he was compelled to leave he asked a confidential friend to keep him informed how things went with Miss Philipse. This deputy, Joseph Chew, a few months later reported thus:—

“As to the latter part of your letter I often had the pleasure of breakfasting with the charming Polly. Roger Morris was there (don't be startled), but not always. You know he is a ladies' man, — always has something to say. The town talked of it as a sure and settled affair. I can't say I think so, and that I much doubt it, but assure you I had little acquaintance with Mr. Morris and only slightly hinted it to Miss Polly; but how can you be excused to continue so long at Philadelphia? I think I should have made a kind of flying march of it if it had been only to see whether the works were sufficient to withstand a vigorous attack, — you, a soldier and a lover — I intend to set out to-morrow for New York, where I will not be wanting to let Miss Polly know the sincere

regard a friend of mine has for her, and I am sure if she had my eyes to see through she would prefer him to all others.”¹

Washington, for reasons unknown, remained supine, and the young woman became the bride of Braddock's aide-de-camp, the Captain Morris referred to.

Captain George Mercer wrote to Washington from Charles Town, August 17th, 1757:—

“A great imperfection here too is the bad shape of the ladies. Many of them are crooked, and have a very bad air, and not those enticing, heaving, throbbing, alluring, plump breasts common with our northern belles.”

From Chew, a little later, came this comment on one part of the country:—

“New England vanity seems to be at as high a flow as ever. . . . One of the finest fellows in the colony was absolutely rejected by the Assembly, for no other reason than using the following words at Lake George (1755) when the forces seemed inclined to give way: ‘*Damn ye, my lads, stand to the breastworks and fire away, — you kill them faster than the Devil can carry them off.*’

“This was and is esteemed by our pious, sanctified brutes as great profaneness, and shows the want of faith and grace.”

Returned to Winchester Washington found that the Indians had committed several murders in the

¹ It is especially in such personal aspects that the Hamilton Collection of letters to Washington valuably supplements Mr. Sparks’.

neighborhood, and that the frontier was likely to be driven back to the Blue Ridge. With natural passion, considering the conditions, he speaks of the Indians "and their more cruel Associates." Two weeks before Dumas, then in command of Fort Duquesne, had written, in orders to a subordinate, leading a party of Indian scouts, special directions "to prevent the savages from committing any cruelties upon those who may fall into their hands." In 1757 this instruction was found in the pocket of a French cadet, killed near Fort Cumberland, "If any prisoners are taken, he will see that no cruelty is used by the savages."¹ Perhaps it is not surprising that, with so many massacres in their minds, settlers made little allowance for French instructions.

Doubtless Washington was somewhat piqued by the superior success of the French in holding the savage ear—a feat which he so keenly wished to perform. Although a self-contained youth, he was hot-blooded, and his heat led to adjectives against his foes, and to sarcasm: "Mr. Pearis sends the scalp by Jenkins; and I hope, although it is not an Indian's, they will meet with an adequate reward at least, as the monsieur's is of much more consequence." He spoke of his foes as "an insulting and merciless

¹ Cf. Pennsylvania Archives, II., 600, and *Memoirs of Hist. Soc. of Pa.*, Vol. 6, p. 289.

enemy," and of the possible victory of the French as "a final stab to liberty and property." They were "barbarians, with hellish arts," more cruel than the Indians. To Dinwiddie he made use of this eloquence:—

"I am too little acquainted, sir, with pathetic language, to attempt a description of the people's distresses, though I have a generous soul, sensible of wrong, and swelling for redress. But what can I do? If bleeding, dying! would glut their insatiate revenge, I would be a willing offering to savage fury, and die by inches to save a people!"

"Hoping it will now be in our power to testify a just abhorrence of the cruel butcheries exercised on our friends, in the unfortunate day of General Braddock's defeat; and, moreover, to show our enemies, that we *can* practise all that lenity of which they *only* can boast, without affording any adequate proofs at all."

That sarcasm may seem to contrast with this report:—

"I always send out some white people with the Indians, and will, to-day or to-morrow, send an officer and some alert white men with another party of Cherokees, as you desire it; tho', I must confess, that I think these scalping parties of Indians we send out will more effectually harrass the enemy (by keeping them under continual alarms) than any parties of white people can do."

We must remember, however, to judge fairly the passions of those days, that the English employed Indians only in warfare, whereas the French

probably instigated them to attacks on peaceable settlements, with the resulting murders of women and children.

Washington believed the Indians superior to the best white men in their manner of fighting in the woods, in craft, activity, and endurance. They stirred him even into imagery: "They prowl about like wolves, and, like them, do their mischief by stealth." He thought them worth "more than twice their number of white men." "No troops in the universe can guard against the cunning and wiles of Indians." He spoke of Indians as "the best if not the *only* troops fit to cope with Indians in such grounds." With equal ardor he stated that "the timidity of the inhabitants of this country is to be equalled by nothing but their perverseness."

His troubles had led him again to the brink of resignation, but tactful treatment on every hand quieted his feelings, and he continued with his work, seeking men used to hunting, and setting a standard of discipline indicated by these rules:—

"Any commissioned officer, who stands by and sees irregularities committed, and does not endeavor to quell them, shall be immediately put under arrest. Any non-commissioned officer present, who does not interpose, shall be immediately reduced and receive corporal punishment.

"Any soldier, who shall presume to quarrel or fight shall receive five hundred lashes, without the benefit of

a court-martial. The offender, upon complaint made, shall have strict justice done him. Any soldier found drunk shall receive one hundred lashes, without benefit of a court-martial."

A slightly later rule was: "The officers are desired, if they hear any man swear, or make use of an oath or execration, to order the offender twenty-five lashes immediately, without a court-martial. For the second offence, they will be more severely punished." To Stephen he wrote: "Waters and Burrass behaved extremely ill when they were sent down last. If I could lay my hands on them, I would try the effect of 1000 lashes on the former, and whether a general court-martial would not condemn the latter to a life eternal!"

After a mutiny he reported: "We have held a General Court Martial on the Ring-leaders; flogged several severely; and have some under sentence of death." Referring to desertions he said: "I have a Gallows near 40 feet high erected (which has terrified the *rest* exceedingly), and I am determined if I can be justified in the proceeding, to hang two or three on it, as an example to others." To Dinwiddie he wrote: "Your Honor will, I hope, excuse my hanging instead of shooting them. It conveyed much more terror to others, and it was for example sake that we did it."

However, he was not without mercy:—

“As your Honor were pleased to leave to my discretion to punish or pardon the criminals, I have resolved on the latter, since I find example of so little weight, and since those poor unhappy criminals have undergone no small pain of body and mind in a dark prison, closely ironed.”

Washington believed that the only way to make the colony safe was to destroy the French on the Ohio. Governor Dinwiddie for once agreed with him, but that troublesome official was recalled, and sailed in January, 1758. Lord Loudoun, then the commander, selected for the unworthy family reasons which were then so powerful in England, paid little attention to Virginia troubles, being occupied with schemes against Canada, and he also was recalled. Dr. Franklin has preserved the traditional jest about Loudoun, that he was like St. George on the signs, always on horseback and never advancing. Washington was taken so ill that he went to Mount Vernon, where dysentery and fever used him up so thoroughly that he was unable for four months to return to his command.

When he recovered, the good effects of William Pitt's rise to the ministry in England were being felt. Washington found that another expedition against Fort Duquesne, for which he had so vigorously pleaded, was now to be made, under command of General John Forbes. Pitt also proposed

that the royal government should bear heavy expenses formerly borne by the colonies, and that provincial officers, up to and including the rank of colonel, should rank equally with those holding the king's commission. Pleased with the new minister's liberality, the Virginia assembly voted to increase its army to two thousand men, in two regiments, one to be under the immediate charge of Washington, who also remained commander-in-chief of the Virginia forces. He went to work, and began immediately laboring over the details which affect the efficiency of an army. He begged for army tents, field equipage, rum, tools, clothes, and for the removal of an inequality of pay between the two regiments. Having the discretionary power of calling out the militia, he refused to use it, because a draft would cause such discontent; and a little later he spoke of militia as "ungovernable and refractory." One of his practical reforms was to put his soldiers and officers into Indian dress. "'Tis an unbecoming dress, I confess, for an officer; but convenience, rather than show, I think, should be consulted."

Starting for the Ohio, Washington was, for the second time, a candidate for the Virginia Assembly. This time, although he did not comply with the appeals of his friends to be present, he was elected, at considerable expense for rum, wine, brandy, beer, punch, and food.

Another matter of some importance was begun before his departure. His interest in women was that of the typical soldier, strong, and, intellectually speaking, superficial, — rather boyish. He apparently did not work much havoc among them. He lacked the gift of intimacy, and although handsome in figure, he was stiff, and his face was marked by the smallpox. The only thing in him which pleased them was military glory. However, his time was approaching. Riding by the house of a friend, mounted, it is said, on the horse on which Braddock was killed, and which had been left to him by that general, he was persuaded to stay to dinner. At this meal was another guest, almost his own age, who had been a widow about a year. Washington talked with her, decided to remain all night, came back again as soon as he could (in May, 1758), stayed another day, and when he began his march, in July, he sent her the following, from near Fort Cumberland: —

“We have begun our march for the Ohio. A Courier is starting for Williamsburg, and I embrace the opportunity to send a few words to one whose life is now inseparable from mine. Since that happy hour when we made our pledges to each other, my thoughts have been continually going to you as to another self. That an All-powerful Providence may keep us both in safety is the prayer of your ever faithful and

“Ever affectionate Friend,

“20th of July,

“G. WASHINGTON.

“MRS. MARTHA CUSTIS.”

A couple of months later, from the same camp, he wrote to Mrs. George William Fairfax:—

“If you allow that any honor can be derived from my opposition to our present system of management, you destroy the merit of it entirely in me by attributing my anxiety to the animating prospect of possessing Mrs. Custis, when—I need not tell you, guess yourself. Should not my own honor and country’s welfare be the excitement? ’Tis true, I profess myself a votary of love. I acknowledge that a lady is in the case, and further, I confess that this lady is known to you. . . . I feel the force of her amiable beauties in the recollection of a thousand tender passages that I could wish to obliterate, till I am bid to revive them. But experience, alas! sadly reminds me how impossible this is, and evinces an opinion which I have long entertained, that there is a Destiny which has the control of our actions, not to be resisted by the strongest efforts of Human Nature.

“You have drawn me, dear Madame, or rather I have drawn myself, into an honest confession of a simple Fact. Misconstrue not my meaning; doubt it not, nor expose it.”

When the army finally started, Washington begged the privilege of being in the lead. He had differences of opinion with his superior officers, and he pressed his ideas to the end. Their most serious difference was about the route. Bouquet wished to build a new road through Pennsylvania, as Lord Loudoun had decided to do before his recall. Washington wished to use Braddock’s old road.

His own view of his motives is thus stated by him. "I am uninfluenced by prejudice, having no hopes or fears but for the public good." It was charged at this time that Virginia sought to have the only road to the Ohio for commercial advantages. In a letter of the times was this sentence:—

"The Virginians are much chagrined at the opening of the road through this government, and Colonel Washington has been a good deal sanguine and obstinate upon the occasion."

Certainly Washington's language, considering the fair arguments against him, and the ultimate outcome, was not remarkable for moderation. It was his opinion, after his advice was rejected, that "nothing but a miracle" could procure success. However, no miracle appeared, and success came. Forbes wrote from Shippensburg, September 4th, to Bouquet, who was in the camp at Rays Town:—

"I am afraid our army will not admit of a division, lest one-half meets with a check; therefore I would consult Colonel Washington, though perhaps not follow his advice, as his behaviour about the roads was nowadays like a soldier."

Of course that language is too strong, but it is well to notice the young Colonel's insistent desire to have his own way. It was thoroughly a part of his character.

As a fact, the fort was abandoned without a struggle, partly from the desertion of French Indians, one of the many things Forbes hoped to accomplish by delay. In Washington's favor it is to be said, nevertheless, that, a few days before, a council of war had determined that the enterprise would have to be delayed a year, when they accidentally learned from prisoners how weakly the fort was defended, and pushed on, to find it had been burned at night, while the French escaped down the Ohio.

Washington proceeded to Mount Vernon, stopped to see Mrs. Custis, set the date of his marriage a few weeks ahead, and then laid down the command of the Virginia forces.

With this series of Indian wars in mind, it is partly amusing and partly impressive to read, in the works of Theodore Parker, that the New York Indians hold this tradition of Washington. "Alone of all white men," say they, "he has been admitted to the Indian Heaven, because of his justice to the Red Men. He lives in a great palace, built like a fort. All the Indians, as they go to Heaven, pass by, and he himself is in his uniform, a sword at his side, walking to and fro. They bow reverently with great humility. He returns the salute, but says nothing."

CHAPTER VI

A DOZEN YEARS OF CALM

"The morning was clear and fine but soon clouded and promised much Rain or other falling weather wch. is generally the case after remarkable white Frosts, as it was to-day."

"A very remarkable Circle round the Moon — another Indication of falling weather."

"No frost last night and the ground vastly rotten —"

"Wind at No. West & very boisterous."

"The Wind at No. West, weather clear, somewhat cold and dry-ing. Moon at its first rising remarkably red."

— WASHINGTON'S NOTES.

IN January, 1759, there was a certain gathering in honor of which historians have loved to display much eloquence. Unhappily the bases for the graphic and entertaining descriptions of Washington's marriage are composed of floating stories, and these traditions contradict one another. Certainly the assemblage was brilliant, and the marriage doubtless took place either in the little church of St. Peter, or a few miles from it, in the White House, as the home of Mrs. Martha Custis, on the Pamunkey River, in New Kent County, was called. The governor, in full dress of scarlet and gold, was doubtless but one of many representa-

tives of what was most prosperous and superior in Virginia society. The ceremonies were conducted by Rev. Peter Mossum, who had married Daniel Parke Custis, and the bride was the same who had filled the rôle on the former occasion. She is reported to have been dressed in white satin and silk, with diamond buckles, point lace ruffles, and various ornaments of pearl. She was assuredly the owner of two children, a daughter of six and a son of four, and we may believe that these little people were present, and that various bridesmaids followed her to the altar. The groom was over six feet high, and so heavily built that, although without superfluous flesh, he weighed two hundred pounds. Like his bride, he was twenty-six years old, his heavy features were reddened by the sun, and under his dark brown hair shone two eyes of grayish blue, calm, half sad, often nearly vacant, but capable of shooting fire. This formidable gentleman was arrayed in a coat of blue cloth, lined with red silk and adorned with silver trimmings, a white satin waistcoat, knickerbockers and shoes with buckles of gold, powdered hair, and a straight dress sword. When we remember that Jefferson has called him the best horseman of his age, we may believe that he made a fine figure altogether, whether or not he rode on a decorated horse, accompanied by various gentlemen, by the side of a coach and

six which contained his newly acquired bride. Whatever the details, and whatever our desire to see the caravan sparkling in the sun, we may have a comforting faith that the splendors of the lady and the dignity of the groom were adequately framed in a picture of much glitter and due solemnity.

As Martha Custis Washington was no business woman, her new husband, who was made by the marriage one of the wealthiest men in Virginia, spent several months at the White House putting the family affairs in order, after which he transported his wife and her progeny to Mount Vernon, where they lived happily ever after. As she destroyed all but two of the letters that passed between them, posterity knows little beyond the fact that they were congenial and serene: he a considerate and magnanimous husband, she an affectionate, dependent, and unenlightened housewife, who shared none of her master's higher problems, but was heartily with him in his love of social pastimes, stately courtesies, and country life.

Washington took his seat in the Virginia legislature and held it constantly, but, as there were no matters of absorbing interest before it, his more significant doings were at home. There, as a planter, sportsman, husband, guardian, and social country gentleman, he led a life of happiness,

unseasoned by the delights of danger and success, but also untainted by discouragement and resentment. He worked hard, and even with the closest attention to every detail his fortunes did not improve. The price of tobacco, the staple, was falling, there was no rotation of crops, little was known in Virginia about farming, and slaves were laborers who cost the same in busy and in idle months. Sunday, February 24th, 1760, he noted in his diary that he was unprovided for a demand of ninety pounds on a note, but promised to pay at the next April court. Although cash was so scarce, he said that his "aversion to running in debt" would secure him against overdrawing his credit with the agents who sold his tobacco "unless a manifest advantage is likely to be the result of it," in which emergency he urged them to be lenient and untroubled. A friend wished to borrow four hundred pounds. Washington wrote with cordiality that he would like to lend him twice the sum, "But," he added, "human affairs are always checquered, and vicissitudes in this life are rather to be expected than wondered at." The various estates of which he now had the management answered his description of one of them, that it was "of a kind that rather comes under the denomination of a large than a profitable one," the land being "much worn," so that large crops could not be raised. His energies

were bent, therefore, to making every detail economical. He would sometimes sit at home and figure all day on the various aspects of his affairs, and he kept all his books himself. He killed hogs, looked after the breeding of dogs and horses, sheared sheep, anointing his hounds when they were diseased, and fished industriously, not for pleasure, but for profit, making careful notes about the best wind and weather conditions for successful seining, and giving up a journey because he was "engaged in fishing and other matters which seems I think to require my attendance." He observed the weather with extreme minuteness. He urged frugality and economy everywhere. He saw himself to the building of a goose-pen, to cleaning and threshing his wheat, to caring for a horse with a broken leg, to building a smith's shop, and he carefully noted how long it took his mill to grind a bushel of corn. He mentioned two ploughs which he made himself. "Spent the greatest part of the day in making a new plow of my own invention." "Made another plow the same as my former, excepting that it has two eyes and the other one." His reading, what little he did, harmonized with his preoccupation with primitive necessities. He sent abroad for books on agriculture, suggesting those of which he had heard, including "A New System of Agriculture, or a Speedy Way to Grow Rich," but tell-

ing his agents to send others if they were "in higher esteem." That his agricultural pursuits were not without an occasional dramatic incident is shown by his notes about an oyster man who stopped at his landing and "plagued him a good deal by his disorderly behavior." Washington "in the most peremptory manner" ordered him away, but the man persisted nevertheless, and departed in the morning. Sparks tells a story about a poacher, whose gun was heard by Washington. Mounting a horse and riding toward the sound, the proprietor found the intruder in a canoe, a few yards from the banks of a creek. The poacher raised, cocked and aimed his musket. Washington, undaunted, rode into the creek, seized the canoe, drew it to land, and there fitly chastised the culprit. That bodily punishment was a corrective which the retired warrior felt perfectly competent to administer is shown by this passage in a letter to the Major George Muse who has already appeared to disadvantage in this story:—

"Your impertinent letter was delivered to me yesterday. As I am not accustomed to receive such from any man, nor would I have taken the same language from you personally, without letting you feel some marks of my resentment, I would advise you to be cautious in writing me a second of the same tenor."

The slaves, who did most of his work, really had no great cause to love their master. To

them the owner was never cruel, nor was he ever generous. When Charles Remond, the eloquent colored orator, called George Washington a villain, because he held slaves, Wendell Phillips replied, "Charles, the epithet is infelicitous." He was less than most planters subject to Dr. Johnson's taunt: "How is it that we hear the loudest yelps for liberty from the drivers of negroes?" Nor must we forget the difference in the times. To our minds it looks rather odd to see such an entry as, "Sett Kate and Doll to heaping the dung about the stable," but in all probability Kate and Doll sang at their occupation. When they were ill, he would have the doctor summoned when there was a prospect of cure, but in the last stages of a complaint it was "incurring an expense for nothing." In giving Washington's attitude toward these people, I shall take the incidents and opinions mainly from the last years of his life, since the facts are unpleasant enough, even when his conscience had reached its most sensitive state about them. If any negro attempted to keep a dog, he was to be severely punished, and the dog hanged,—for fear of injury to sheep and hogs.

"It is observed, by the weekly reports, that the sewers make only six shirts a week, and the last week Carolina (without being sick) made only five. Mrs. Washington says their usual task was to make nine with shoulder

straps and good sewing. Tell them therefore from me that what *has* been done *shall* be done by fair or foul means."

Toward the end of his life he decided neither to buy nor to sell, but he yielded to inconvenience when he was badly in want of a cook. His negroes were apparently fed as much as they needed, but not as much as they desired.

"It is not my wish, or desire, that my negroes should have an oz. of meal more, nor less, than is sufficient to feed them plentifully."

"In most explicit language I desire they may have plenty; for I will not have my feelings again hurt with complaints of this sort, nor lye under the imputation of starving my negroes."

How that imputation existed is shown in the remarks of Richard Parkinson, a captious, unreasonable, and ill-informed Englishman, who made a tour of America just before Washington's death, and has kept, and probably heightened, some of the neighboring gossip:—

"There is a remark frequently made of the General's exposing his old white horse to sale which he rode during the war; which shows that he treated every creature according to its nature—a horse as a horse, a negro as a negro."

"Only take General Washington for an example: I have not the least reason to think it was his desire, but the necessity of the case: but it was the sense of all his neighbours that he treated them with more severity than any other man. He regularly delivered weekly to every

working negro two or three pounds of pork, and some salt herrings, often badly cured, and a small portion of Indian corn."

"The first time I walked with General Washington among his negroes, when he spoke to them, he amazed me by the utterance of his words. He spoke as differently as if he had been quite another man, or had been in anger."

"General Washington weighed the food for all his negroes young and old. . . . It is said that he never clothed them until they were of a certain age."

The extent to which Washington would go to recover his negroes is neatly contrasted with his sense of the importance of public morality, especially "north of Virginia," in the two following extracts:—

"It is highly probable Paul has left the parts (by water or land). If Mr. Dulany is disposed to pursue any measure for the purpose of recovering *his* man, I will join him in the expence so far as it may respect Paul;—but I would not have my name appear in any advertisement, or other measure, leading to it."

"I had no other objection to the advertising of Paul than that of having my name appear therein;—*at least in any papers North of Virginia*; ¹ and that he has not gone South of it is natural to infer, if he was governed by motives of policy, or by advice."

This was shortly before he died. Such reading is not delightful to our contemporary sense; but one of the virtues of the present taste in history and politics is the desire to make our ideals

¹ The italics are mine.

not out of fiction, but out of grounded truth. That Washington could not tell a lie we no longer believe. That he would advertise for a runaway slave if his proceeding were not to be known north of Virginia, we know. He was not a Quixote: few great men are. He was not even a beautiful or imaginative soul. His feet were always on the earth. Looking the facts of human nature fairly in the face, we get a better encouragement from men of inspiring lives, among whom Washington is perhaps the highest modern hero. Mr. Gladstone was inclined to put him first among the public men of all time. When Louis Philippe was an exile in America, he was a guest at Mount Vernon. Noticing his host's voluminous correspondence, the exile asked the retired leader whether he did not fear that some of his words or deeds would come up in judgment against him when the historian was making up the estimate of his career. General Washington answered that he had never said anything or written anything which he cared to recall, nor had ever done anything which he regretted. It was a strange statement to be able to make, after years of war and years of statesmanship; and yet, even in the face of relentless modern criticism, it still wears the face of truth.¹

¹ For this story I am indebted to the Honorable Chauncey M. Depew, who had it from the king's son, the Duc d'Angoulême.

Washington was not an intimate nature. To a romantic imagination he will seem unreal. With such a character, charming and intricate relations of sympathy would be as impossible as they would with a glacier. It was a pregnant sentence that he wrote, "I will never again have two women in my house when I am there myself." It goes with the singular ingenuousness of his occasional advice where the sentimental emotions were concerned. Take this, written at a later period, to Eleanor Custis:—

"Love is said to be an involuntary passion, and it is, therefore, contended that it cannot be resisted. This is true in part only, for like all things else, when nourished and supplied plentifully with aliment, it is rapid in its progress; but let these be withdrawn and it may be stifled in its birth or much stunted in its growth."

"The declaration, without the *most indirect* invitation of yours, must proceed from the man to render it permanent and valuable, and nothing short of good sense and an easy, unaffected conduct can draw the line between prudery and coquetry. It would be no great departure from truth to say that it rarely happens otherwise than that a thorough-paced coquette dies in celibacy, as a punishment for her attempts to mislead others by encouraging looks, words, or actions, given for no other purpose than to draw men on to make overtures that they may be rejected."

His existence during these retired years was relieved by the various activities of a solemn spirit which loved the light of play. He was not

a good hunter, but he spent many hours a week in pursuit of hare, deer, ducks, and especially foxes, the last being fashionable victims which were usually pursued in company with some members of the Fairfax family. He played cards, for nominal stakes, was addicted to nuts and candy, which helped him to an early set of false teeth, which caused the expression of his mouth with which his portraits make us familiar, and he kept himself supplied with claret, cider, madeira, porter, and rhenish, and he went to the theatre when in Alexandria, often three or four nights running. He went to the races, and balls were a favorite diversion. When at home, without company, and not at work, he seems to have been lonely, having no imaginative resources. That these long country evenings never tempted him to supply the deficiencies of his early education is another proof that his mind was occupied solely with the simplest concerns of man. His general tone in company was grave, his conversation pedestrian, his attempts at social lightness heavy. When he enunciated a general truth, he usually repeated it in several letters. "Time only can reveal it," was a favorite. "You must give me leave to say that it is works and not words that people will judge from, and where one man deceives another from time to time, his word being disregarded, all confidence is lost." He was neither very philosophi-

cal nor very religious, but a man who dealt with phenomena in front of him, and went decently to church. Serious references to the Deity in his letters were at this period scarce and conventional. His religion was part of his sense of propriety. Probably he did not then, even in his own mind, question any of the tenets of the church; but they were not the springs of his life. In an age when, as he himself noted, there was some feeling against lotteries, he indulged in them freely. He took religion much as he did ceremony and manners,—from the most elegant traditions of the neighborhood.

Toward elegance and fashion, indeed, he showed an almost touching modesty. Like other planters of the time, he imported most of his goods, and he frequently ordered specific makes with the proviso that others should take their place if style were against him. “Fashionable” and “most fashionable” preceded orders for every conceivable article, from china to tape, and from wearing apparel to a doll for the little Patsy Custis. On his chariot he would be glad to have green, but in that he “would be governed by fashion.” Incidentally the orders for wearing apparel gave some hints at the structure of his body, “my stature is six feet; otherwise rather slender than corpulent.”

The thoroughly canny side of the honest husbandman is to be seen in his land speculations

on the Ohio, in North Carolina, Virginia, Pennsylvania, and in Florida, which at this period keenly interested him, although he looked upon them as so uncertain that he compared them to lottery tickets. Of some of the western land that was in dispute he wrote : —

“What inducements have men to explore uninhabited wilds, but the prospect of getting good lands? Would any man waste his time, expose his fortune, nay life, in such a search, if he was to share the good and the bad with those that come after him? Surely not.”

“All which may be avoided by a *silent management and the (operation) snugly carried on by you under the guise of hunting other game.*”

Just as in his career as a youthful soldier he had been impartially keen about the interest of himself, his neighbors, and the public, so now, while he was alert to secure for himself, with all necessary secrecy, a slice of the rich wilderness, he was at the same time working assiduously for others. Labor and expense alike he endured to secure to the soldiers the land which the legislature had promised them. Sympathy with his sick friends he always had, and he himself knew much of illness. One commodity which he bestowed upon his neighbors with some profusion was advice. He laid down a rule against it, but he was sometimes more addicted to creating than to obeying maxims. In the Indian wars he

had been frank in advising his superiors. To a debtor with whom he went fox-hunting every few days he could, in refusing a new loan, write masses of wisdom in favor of retrenchment. To a merchant, who was also a friend, he volunteered a warning about importation and prices. He clearly observed the frailties of man, not excluding himself. On one day he noted in his diary: "Doctor Laurie came here. I may add drunk." On another: "Visited my Plantations and receiv'd an Instance of Mr. French's great Love of money in disappointing me of some Pork because the price had risen to 22/6, after he had engaged to let me have it at 20/." On a third he directed an indictment for fraud to be brought against a man who had sold him some iron. Again he noticed that a friend of his "obliquely hinted" his willingness to make a certain sale. The "shuffling behavior" of a party to a business negotiation convinced Washington that he was a "trifling body," and a few days later he decided that the same man was "nothing less than a thorough pac'd rascall." He observed in himself, as the cause of delay in correspondence, "a mixture of bad health and indolence," the latter doubtless a euphemism for disinclination to write social letters:—

"Richard Stephens hard at work with an ax. Very extraordinary this!"

“Visited my Plantation and found to my great surprise Stephen constantly at work.”

His relations to his immediate family showed Washington in the most touching light of anything in his history, for there the strong man was all tenderness, and the masterful spirit all compliance. To his mother, indeed, he seems to have shown little more than conventional respect, but to his wife and her children he was devoted. Poor Patsy Custis had fits, and when she died suddenly in one of them, Washington's sympathy with the mother was tender.

“It is an easier matter to conceive than to describe the distress of this Family; especially that of the unhappy Parent of our Dear Patsy Custis, when I inform you that yesterday removed the Sweet Innocent Girl Entered into a more happy & peaceful abode than any she has met with in the afflicted Path she hitherto has trod. . . .

“This sudden and unexpected blow, I scarce need add, has reduced my poor wife to the lowest ebb of Misery.”

The sacrifice involved in wedlock he took cheerfully.

“The longing desire, which for many years I have had of visiting the great Matropolis of that Kingdom, is not in the least abated . . . but I am now tied by the Leg and must set inclination aside . . . I am now I believe fixed at this seat with an agreeable Consort for Life. And hope to find more happiness in retirement

than I ever experienced amidst a wide and bustling World."

Valuing opportunities for travel, and setting store by a kind of knowledge which he had no tendency to acquire, he took the most intense interest in the education of young John Parke Custis. This lad began with promise, but soon fell away. Washington, therefore, requested of his instructor the closest supervision of the young man's habits and companions. He urged French as "a part of polite education," and to a man who was to mix in a large circle absolutely necessary. Without arithmetic the common affairs of life, he thought, were not to be managed. Geometry and the higher mathematics within limits were equally useful. He naturally spoke of the advantages of surveying. Philosophy, moral and natural, he thought "a very desirable knowledge for a gentleman." Of the advantages of Greek he did not pretend to judge. Some of his friends were strongly against Custis's going to England, fearing the risk to this last member of the family. Washington was unconvinced, but hesitated, "Not that I think his becoming a mere scholar is a desirable education for a gentleman, but I conceive a knowledge of books is the basis upon which other knowledge is to be built, and that it is men and things more than books he is to be acquainted with by travelling." A still more touching interest in education

was shown in his offer of £25 a year to keep the son of a friend in college. In all his acts, in this interval, just before the greatest test of his life, we see a noble soul in the man of deeds living the life of nature, with a wistful look now and then toward the forbidden world of learning and imagination—on the whole happy in domestic harmony, in days filled with work useful for character and body, and in a conviction that every year he spent was filled with good, and free from evil. When public effort was demanded, he could covet honor; but he would have been equally able, a virtuous farmer, to live and die studying the crops and the weather, caring for his family, and taking an unflagging part in the business concerns of the neighborhood. A fiery warrior in battle he was in his field the devoted husbandman, filling long days with the thousand interests of the farm. As in other years nothing should prove too large for him, so now no useful duty was too small.

CHAPTER VII

THE POLITICAL CRISIS

“Those fathers accomplished the Revolution on a strict question of principle. The Parliament of Great Britain asserted a right to tax the Colonies in all cases whatsoever; and it was precisely on this question that they made the Revolution turn. The amount of taxation was trifling, but the claim itself was inconsistent with liberty; and that was, in their eyes, enough. It was against the recital of an act of Parliament, rather than against any suffering under its enactments, that they took up arms. They went to war against a preamble. They fought seven years against a declaration. They poured out their treasures and their blood like water, in a contest against an assertion which those less sagacious and not so well schooled in the principles of civil liberty would have regarded as barren phraseology, or mere parade of words. They saw in the claim of the British Parliament a seminal principle of mischief, the germ of unjust power; they detected it, dragged it forth from underneath its plausible disguises, struck at it; nor did it elude either their steady eye or their well-directed blow till they had extirpated and destroyed it, to the smallest fibre. On this question of principle, while actual suffering was yet afar off, they raised their flag against a power, to which, for purposes of foreign conquest and subjugation, Rome, in the height of her glory, is not to be compared; a power which has dotted over the surface of the whole globe with her possessions and military posts, whose morning drum-beat, following the sun, and keeping company with the hours, circles the earth with one continuous and unbroken strain of the martial airs of England.” — DANIEL WEBSTER.

WHILE Washington was farming at Mount Vernon, he had enough contact with the political

world to keep his mind on the developing issues. When he first took his seat in the Virginia Assembly, he was so embarrassed, according to Edmund Randolph, that while he was blushing and stammering in an attempt to acknowledge his enthusiastic reception, the speaker relieved him by saying: "Sit down, Mr. Washington. Your modesty is equal to your valor, and that surpasses the power of any language that I possess." His general popularity, rather than any political activity, caused him to be regularly elected by large majorities. Although his interest was not keen, his conscience kept him in regular attendance, and he postponed a trip to Ohio and other private objects. He maintained social relations with many men versed in political thought, the most intimate being the radical George Mason and the conservative Fairfax family, so that he heard both sides. On a trip to New York we find him dining with General Gage, and the imagination can hardly avoid looking ahead to the measurement of power between him and his old associates in arms. In the Assembly, for long stretches of time, private bills were the main concern, and these sessions were necessarily dull. Even the news from the French wars brought out little comment from Washington.

In 1765, however, there were bigger things than French and Indian wars on the horizon.



GEORGE WASHINGTON AS COLONEL OF 22D VIRGINIA MILITIA

From the portrait at Washington and Lee University. Painted in May, 1772, by
C. W. Peale.

Washington's attitude toward the tax on tea, paper, glass, and other articles was thus expressed in a letter dated April 5th, 1769, to George Mason, who afterward drafted the first Constitution of Virginia, and was a warm advocate of state rights.

"That no man should scruple, or hesitate a moment, to use a—ms in defence of so valuable a blessing, on which all the good and evil of life depends, is clearly my opinion. Yet a—ms I would beg leave to add, should be the last resource, the *dernier resort*."

He had taken equally decided ground the preceding year, as shown by a letter to him, dated Berlin, June 15th, 1777.

"I never forgot your declaration, when I had last the pleasure of being at your house in 1768, that you were ready to take your musket upon your shoulder whenever your country called upon you."

On the constitutional question of the right of taxation Washington's views were by no means equal in adequacy to those of some of his legal-minded neighbors. Most of the leaders at this period were lawyers, many of them distinguished in a kind of thinking which lay beyond Washington. He was not among those Americans who might justify Burke's statement that the study of law had made them acute, inquisitive, dexterous, full of resources. His arguments were very elementary, truly, compared to the reasoning which was used on both sides of the Atlantic in

these critical years. Washington discussed more ably the probable working of schemes than the foundation of claims. He was accustomed to study faithfully the argumentative productions of the time, in spite of his being a follower rather than a leader. His practical attitude was not without its historical justification. The historian Robertson represented much plain sense, when, soon after this time, he asserted that the distinction between taxation and regulation was mere folly. The whole argument about the right of Parliament to tax the colonies was one of those cloaks for real issues that are needed by logical minds. The important things were, what the colonies desired, and how much they were willing to do to get it. In such fundamentals lay Washington's strength. The probabilities of separation had been noticed by political prophets for almost half a century. It was Washington's nature to see such inevitable tendencies more clearly than he saw the reasons for them; to see also whether they were right or wrong, without knowing, or imagining he knew, how to state analytically in what right and wrong consisted. Even now, before the heaviest responsibilities of his life had begun, it was his custom not to be in complete accord with any proposition until it had rested for some time in his mind; but every year the arguments between the rebellious and the conservative mem-

bers of his community left him more in accord with the cautious branch of the radicals. Of Washington's demeanor at this time Jefferson wrote in his autobiography: —

“I served with General Washington in the legislature of Virginia before the revolution, and, during it, with Dr. Franklin in Congress. I never heard either of them speak ten minutes at a time, nor to any but the main point which was to decide the question. They laid their shoulders to the great points, knowing that the little ones would follow of themselves.”

Washington's opinions at this stage have been preserved in full in a letter of July 4th, 1774, to Bryan Fairfax, whose aristocratic origin naturally made him a royalist, and whose honest, cultivated, and logical mind was unable to see the cogency of the radical reasoning. He tried to draw from Washington historical and technical arguments, and succeeded only in eliciting practical ones. The debate, however, was courteous on both sides, and even in the midst of the Revolution Washington wrote to Fairfax,¹ “The difference in our political sentiments never made any difference in my friendship for you.”

Washington was present when the Virginia Assembly met on August 1st, and made an ex-

¹ September 24th, 1777, from camp near Pottsville, from a copy lent me by Mrs. Burton Harrison, who generously allowed me to make free use of her material.

port as well as an import agreement. By this time his feelings were very strong.

“Colonel Washington made the most eloquent speech at the Virginia Convention that ever was made. Says he, ‘I will raise one thousand men, subsist them at my own expense, and march myself at their head for the relief of Boston.’”¹

He felt that his freedom was interfered with, and he accepted the arguments from brains more forensic than his own.

The convention, on the 5th of August, elected, as delegates to the first Continental Congress Peyton Randolph, Richard Henry Lee, George Washington, Patrick Henry, Richard Bland, Benjamin Harrison, and Edmund Pendleton.

The first Continental Congress was called for September 5th. Patrick Henry and Edmund Pendleton stopped at Mount Vernon on their way, and passed the night. There is a story that Mrs. Washington said to Pendleton and Henry: “I hope you will all stand firm. I know George will.” The three Virginians proceeded, the next day, to Philadelphia, where a petition to the king was drawn up, as well as addresses to the inhabitants of Quebec and the people of Great Britain, and a memorial to the inhabitants of the British Colonies. Washington had experienced scruples, about a non-exportation agreement but they had

¹ John Adams's diary, August 31st, 1774, quoting Lynch.

vanished, as might be guessed from the unanimity of the last Virginia association, covering exports as well as imports, even had John Adams not left this letter:—

“The other delegates from Virginia returned to their State in full confidence that all our grievances must be redressed. . . .

“Washington only was in doubt. He never spoke in public. In private he joined with those who advocated a non-exportation as well as a non-importation agreement. With both he thought we should prevail. With either, he thought it doubtful. Henry was clear in one opinion, Richard Henry Lee in an opposite opinion, and Washington doubted between the two. Henry, however, appeared in the end to be exactly in the right.”

Silas Deane wrote to his wife:—

“Col. Washington is nearly as tall a man as Col. Fitch and almost as hard a countenance; yet with a very young look and an easy soldier-like air and gesture. He does not appear above forty-five, yet was in the first action in 1753 and 1754, on the Ohio, and in 1755 was with Braddock, and was the means of saving the remains of that unfortunate army. It is said that in the House of Burgesses in Virginia, on hearing of the Boston Port Bill, he offered to raise and arm and lead one thousand men at his own expense, for the defence of the country, were there need of it. His fortune is said to be equal to such an undertaking.”

A story of the time ran thus:—

“Mr. Henry, on his return home, being asked, ‘Who is the greatest man in Congress?’ replied, ‘If you speak

of eloquence, Mr. Rutledge, of South Carolina, is by far the greatest orator; but if you speak of solid information and sound judgment, Colonel Washington is unquestionably the greatest man on that floor.' "

One who was present at Philadelphia, but whose information may nevertheless be doubted, wrote that he heard that Colonel Washington had said, "he wished to God the Liberties of America were to be determined by a single Combat between himself and George." He was, however, now prepared to say: "*More blood will be spilled on this occasion, if the ministry are determined to push matters to extremity, than history has ever yet furnished instances of* in the annals of North America." He endeavored to conduct the affairs of his farm, but the times were sweeping him along. Asked by several independent companies to take command of them, he consented. He voted to enroll the Virginia militia and to pay a tax for equipment.

Meantime, the government of Great Britain was confronted with no easy question. As a response to the preparation of militia, ready to serve at a moment's notice, and hence called minute-men, a royal proclamation forbade exportation to the colonies of arms and ammunition. Well might the great Frederick say: "Enfin, Messieurs, je ne comprends pas ces choses là; je n'ai point de colonie; j'espère que vous vous tire-

rez bien de l'affaire ; mais elle me paroît un peu epineuse." It had to be met, however. There were now eleven colonies in a position almost as extreme as that which Massachusetts had been holding alone, — a situation which led to Burke's classic declaration that he did not know how to draw an indictment against a whole people. Chatham, who, so many years before, had shown a desire to treat the colonies with consideration, and who had been living in retirement, appeared in the House of Lords on January 20th, having announced in advance a motion on American affairs, which caused the bar to be crowded with Americans, among them, by Chatham's invitation, Benjamin Franklin. With Lexington and Concord yet to come, the British orator said : —

"For myself, I must declare that in all my reading and observation — and history has been my favorite study ; I have read Thucydides, and have studied and admired the master States of the world — that for solidity of reasoning, force of sagacity, and wisdom of conclusion under such a complication of difficult circumstances, no nation or body of men can stand in preference to the General Congress at Philadelphia. All attempts to impose servitude on such men, to establish despotism over a mighty Continent, must be in vain, must be fatal. We shall be forced ultimately to retract ; let us retract while we can, not when we must."

In spite of Chatham's eloquence his motion to have Gage's troops removed from Boston was

heavily defeated. Undaunted, consulting almost daily with Franklin, he prepared for a second attack. Franklin, whose words do not necessarily represent the truth, assured him that never in all his travels had he met a single person who favored independence. On February 1st, Chatham offered a bill declaring the general dependence of the colonies on the British crown, and the power of Parliament to regulate them in all matters affecting the general welfare of the empire, but also declaring that the crown had no right to tax them without their consent. The Earl of Sandwich arose, and, looking full at Franklin, who was leaning on the bar, said he could not believe that such a bill was drawn by a British peer, but that it was rather the work of some American.

While one part of intelligent public opinion in England was represented by Chatham, Burke, and Fox, the ministry had supporters almost equally prominent. Dr. Johnson's pamphlet on "Taxation No Tyranny" has been laughed at for its arrogance, for such terms as "English Superiority and American Obedience," but it contains some real arguments. George III. was firm. He wrote to Lord North, February 15th, 1775, that he should steadily pursue the "tract" which his conscience dictated, and that was the "tract" of compulsion. He grew rapidly more exasperated,

and was soon in a mood that Dr. Johnson had enjoyed as early as 1769, when he said of the Americans,¹ "Sir, they are a race of convicts, and ought to be thankful for anything we allowed them short of hanging." Johnson also remarked, "I am willing to love all mankind, *except an American.*" He called them "Rascals, Robbers, Pirates," and said he would "burn and destroy them."

Virginia had approved of the proceedings of the first Congress, and had just declared, on the motion of Patrick Henry, in favor of a native militia, and against foreign troops and taxation for their support. Washington, Henry, and Jefferson were members of the committee for carrying out this programme. It was in defending his motion that Henry exclaimed: "We must fight: I repeat it, Sir, we must fight! An appeal to arms and the God of hosts is all that is left us!" During the convention Washington wrote to his brother, referring to an independent company: —

"I . . . shall very cheerfully accept the honor of commanding it, if occasion requires it to be drawn out, as it is my full intention to devote my life and fortune in the cause we are engaged in, if needful."

In this convention: —

"Jefferson was not silent. He argued closely, profoundly, and warmly. . . . Washington was prominent,

¹ Dr. John Campbell told Boswell this.

though silent. His looks bespoke a mind absolved in meditation on his country's fate; but a positive concert between him and Henry could not have more effectually exhibited him to men, than when Henry ridiculed the idea of 'peace when there was no peace,' and enlarged on the idea of preparing for war."¹

On April 17th, 1775, came Lexington and Concord, and on the day that Ethan Allen demanded the surrender of Fort Ticonderoga, "in the name of the Great Jehovah and the Continental Congress," the second Continental Congress met in Philadelphia. Washington's own feelings were expressed in a letter in which he spoke of "the ministerial troops (for we do not, nor can we yet prevail upon ourselves to call them the King's troops)," and added, "the Americans will fight for their liberties and property." Of the battle, he said:—

"Unhappy it is, though, to reflect, that a brother's sword has been sheathed in a brother's breast, and that the once happy and peaceful plains of America are either to be drenched with blood or inhabited by slaves. Sad alternative! But can a virtuous man hesitate in his choice?"

Washington was obviously prepared for war, but not for independence. In this, as in other things, he went hand in hand with the more cautious leaders in the movement for redress. It is surprising to see how much passion could

¹ "Omitted Chapters of American History," Moncure D. Conway, p. 302.

be felt by such a philosopher as Franklin, who arrived in Philadelphia just in time to attend this second convention, and wrote to a former friend in London:—

“MR. STRAHAN: You are a Member of Parliament and one of that majority which has doomed my country to destruction. You have begun to burn and murder our people. Look upon your hands, they are stained with the blood of your relations! You and I were long friends; you are now my enemy, and I am Yours,

“BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.”

Yet Franklin's statement to Chatham about the lack of desire for independence was almost true. James Otis wrote in 1765:—

“God forbid these Colonies should ever prove un-dutiful to their mother country. Whenever such a day shall come, it will be the beginning of a terrible scene. Were these colonies left to themselves to-morrow, America would be a mere shamble of blood and confusion before little petty states could be settled.”

It is related that Washington, on his way to this Congress, was told by the former tutor of his stepson, Rev. Jonathan Boucher, that the path on which he was entering might lead to separation; and the story includes a reply by Washington indicating that he still strongly opposed any such idea.

So highly was Washington considered, that he was made chairman of the committee for recom-

mending the forts to be occupied in the province of New York; of the committee for devising ways and means of procuring ammunition and military stores; the committee for making an estimate of the money necessary to be raised, and the committee for preparing rules and regulations for the government of an army. John Adams wrote to his wife from Philadelphia, May 29th:—

“Colonel Washington appears at Congress in his uniform, and, by his great experience and abilities in military matters, is of much service to us.”

That Washington should wear uniform was natural enough, for, whether or not he had any idea of being chosen for the chief command, it was already settled in Virginia that he should hold first place in the military affairs of that state. That he was in a warlike spirit is certain, whether or not we may believe the story, printed in a London paper of April 15th, 1775, according to which it was reported the year before, that Sir Jeffrey Amherst had said that with five thousand English regulars he would engage to march from one end to the other of the continent of North America, and that this being spoken of publicly in a coffee-house in North America, Colonel Washington, who was present, declared, that with one thousand Virginians he would engage to stop Sir Jeffrey Amherst's march.

John Adams, the ablest member of the strong New England delegation at Philadelphia, was at this time heart and soul in the main cause, every other consideration being subordinated in his mind. James Warren had written to Adams on May 7th:—

“They seem to want a more experienced direction. I could for myself wish to see your friends Washington and L. at the head of it; and yet dare not propose it, though I have it in contemplation.”

Massachusetts had taken the lead, and the South was anxious, particularly Virginia. Adams, in his diary, spoke of the southern jealousy of a New England army, under the command of a New York general:—

“Whether this jealousy was sincere, or whether it was mere pride and a haughty ambition of furnishing a southern General to command the northern army (I cannot say); but the intention was very visible to me that General Washington was their object, and so many of our staunchest men were in the plan, that we could carry nothing without conceding to it.”

When Adams first suggested him in a speech, without referring to him by name, “Mr. Washington, who happened to sit near the door, as soon as he heard me allude to him, from his usual modesty, darted into the library room.”

Elbridge Gerry, then a member of the Provincial Congress at Watertown, wrote to the Massa-

chusetts delegates in the Continental Congress, on June 4th:—

“I should heartily rejoice to see this way the beloved Colonel Washington, and do not doubt the New England Generals would acquiesce in showing to our sister colony Virginia the respect, which she has before experienced from the Continent, in making him Generalissimo.”

On June 17th, while Bunker Hill was being fought at Boston, John Adams was able to write to his wife from Philadelphia:—

“I can now inform you, that the Congress have made choice of the modest and virtuous, the amiable, generous, and brave George Washington, Esquire, to be General of the American Army, and that he is to repair, as soon as possible, to the camp before Boston. This appointment will have a great effect in cementing and securing the union of these colonies.”

Many years later he wrote:—

“The appointment of General Washington to the command in 1775, of an army in Cambridge, consisting altogether of New England men, over the head of officers of their own flesh and choice, a most hazardous step, was another instance of apparent unanimity, and real regret in nearly one half.”

Such is history! Full of good motives, and of petty ones, guided not only by insight but by luck, the Congress put the country's welfare in the hands of a man whose handling of the trust was to set a standard for posterity. The little group

was to prove fallible and human, but it was among the most momentous gathering ever formed, and its decisions were heavy with consequences. It faced an emergency so extreme that the best brains in the country strained themselves to meet it. In the Congress sat men whose names have become immortal; but of all the steps which Congress took, none was more fortunate than the appointment of George Washington to take command of the army assembled at Cambridge.

CHAPTER VIII

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

“There is something charming to me in the conduct of Washington. A gentleman of one of the first fortunes upon the continent, leaving his delicious retirement, his family and friends, sacrificing his ease, and hazarding all in the cause of his country. His views are noble and disinterested. He declared when he accepted the mighty trust, that he would lay before us an exact account of his expenses, and not accept a shilling for pay.” — JOHN ADAMS.

WHEN Washington, on the day following his unanimous election, was officially informed of the choice, he rose in his place in Congress, and made a short speech in which modesty and prudence were combined. Looking ahead to possible failure, he emphasized his shortcomings, thus assuring for himself a reputation for humility if he should succeed, and avoiding reproach if he should fail. “Lest some unlucky event should happen unfavourable to my reputation, I beg it may be remembered by every gentleman in the room, that I this day declare with the utmost sincerity I do not think myself equal to the command I am honoured with.” There can be no doubt that his belief that he was not fit for the task was probably

strong in certain moods—and he was a man of moods. It is related that on the day he received his appointment as commander-in-chief he said to Patrick Henry, “This day will be the commencement of the decline of my reputation.” Certainly he saw that danger, and it made him grave, although he knew also the possibility of success, and the rewards that would come with it.

One other position, genuinely magnanimous and no less astute, was taken in this model speech. Washington was always saving of money in trifles, but he never allowed its value to blind him to higher prizes. His decision to accept no pay has been celebrated by hundreds of writers, from Byron down to our day; but one of them, at least, John Adams, changed his view later, and accused Washington of having, in this refusal, taken an unjustifiable step, by which he won the nation’s heart more than by his public services. There is no doubt that his generosity in large affairs, where big money could help his country, was great. “As to pay, Sir, I beg leave to assure the Congress, that as no pecuniary consideration could have tempted me to accept this arduous employment at the expense of my domestic ease and happiness, I do not wish to make any profit from it.” Doubtless the farmer-soldier could not himself have told the relative values, in his mind, of “domestic ease” and warlike glory, but he knew

the safe and virtuous stand to take. There are many men of that type, but it is not the species of which greatness is usually made, which is one of the reasons that Washington is unique. He was no sophist, as are most men who indulge in much declarations about their own motives. Power and success never tempted him to retreat from what in privacy he saw to be right. Still, it would be childish not to see that the repetition to various friends of his two ideas—not being fit for the command, and being happier at home—was done for reasons. Surely policy is clear enough in these sentences to his brother:—

“How far I may succeed is another point; but this I am sure of, that, in the worst event, I shall have the consolation of knowing, if I act to the best of my judgment, that the blame ought to lodge upon the appointers, not the appointed, as it was by no means a thing of my own seeking, or proceeding from any hint of my friends.”

He was a man of action, and although happy at Mount Vernon, if, when the time for action came, he had been passed over, it would have given him no joy. War had first attracted him. That the arrival of a crisis stirred his appetite there can be no doubt. Lecky calls him “equally free from the passions that spring from interest and from the passions that spring from imagination.” So he was. But, free from the passions of interest, he was well stored with legitimate ambition, and he

was no man to take such an opportunity with unmixed sorrow. The double point of view that existed in him is covered in the sentences of a man who did not love him. "His passions," says Jefferson, "were naturally strong; but his reason, generally, stronger." In nearly all he did, and in most of what he said, the dictator was his reason.

It was this combination of a passionate nature, including an aggressive, dominating will, with an intensely just and ethical spirit, that made it possible for him to have one of the rarest and greatest of his qualities, — "the unequalled dignity of his presence." Pickering, who knew him and freely criticised him, said that this dignity inspired in all who approached him a degree of reverential respect not felt for other men. It was this balance of human elements, under the rule of the highest, that led Erskine to declare Washington the only human being for whom he ever felt "an awful reverence." The eulogies of him are full of immortal tributes to the worth of blood and judgment well commingled. Perhaps it is largely because, although passionate, he was not passion's slave that the world has worn him in its heart's core.

With such a character, and without genius, he needed occasion to show his worth. It was common to say that events made him, a comment which suggests a dilemma where none exists.

Without great events Washington would not have been famous, and, on the other hand, he made events great by his ability in meeting them. It does not follow because a man is of the type that waits for occasions that he does less to mould history. Goldwin Smith has well said that Washington's wisdom was that of judgment rather than of forecast. He did not like to guess, nor was he gifted in surmise. Jefferson, with Washington's waiting intellectual nature in mind, spoke of "such an approbation of it as he usually permitted himself on the first presentation of any idea." This mental reserve was applied to the large, complex set of facts which compose any public question; but it was mixed with traits which had shown in the daring boy commander, in the early battles in the wilderness, and in the aide-de-camp whose reckless courage had so impressed the Indians. He was, as Fisher Ames admirably said, "fearless of dangers that were personal to him, hesitating and cautious when they affected his country."

To emotional, passionate impetuosity, checked by intellectual control, reserve, and sure-footed vigilance, add the personal gentleness and kindness which helped his popularity in Virginia, where for years the number of votes he received for the Assembly vastly outnumbered those of anybody else, and we are prepared for the enthusiastic reception given to his appointment. "The Gen-

eral," wrote John Adams, ably summing up the public impression, is "amiable and accomplished and judicious and cool." Mrs. Adams wrote to her husband:—

"The appointment of the generals Washington and Lee gives universal satisfaction. . . .

". . . I was struck with General Washington. You had prepared me to entertain a favorable opinion of him, but I thought the half was not told me. Dignity with ease and complacency, the gentleman and soldier, looked agreeably blended in him. Modesty marks every line and feature of his face. Those lines of Dryden instantly occurred to me:—

"Mark his majestic fabric ! he's a temple
Sacred by birth, and built by hands divine ;
His soul's the deity that lodges there ;
Nor is the pile unworthy of the god."

Adams, in one of his rebellious moods, asked if Washington would ever have been commander of the Revolutionary army, or President of the United States, if he had not married the rich widow of Mr. Custis. The implication is wholly unfair. There is no evidence that his position in Virginia depended essentially on his wealth. His military fame existed even across the water. Soon after the news reached England, Mr. Wedderburn exclaimed in the House of Commons, "Even the mighty General Washington himself, with his redoubted riflemen, was vanquished by the Indians on the banks of the Ohio."

Before he set out for Boston he carefully expressed his attitude to his wife, in a letter which has great value because it is one of only two that have been preserved:—

“PHILADELPHIA, 18 June, 1775.

“MY DEAREST,

* * * * *

“You may believe me, my dear Patsy, when I assure you, in the most solemn manner, that, so far from seeking this appointment, I have used every endeavor in my power to avoid it, not only from my unwillingness to part with you and the family, but from a consciousness of its being a trust too great for my capacity, and that I should enjoy more real happiness in one month with you at home, than I have the most distant prospect of finding abroad, if my stay were to be seven times seven years. But as it has been a kind of destiny, that has thrown me upon this service, I shall hope that my undertaking it is designed to answer some good purpose. You might, and I suppose did perceive, from the tenor of my letters, that *I was apprehensive I could not avoid this appointment*¹ as I did not pretend to intimate when I should return. . . . I shall feel no pain from the toil or the danger of the campaign; my unhappiness will flow from the uneasiness I know you will feel from being left alone. I therefore beg that you will summon your whole fortitude, and pass your time as agreeably as possible. Nothing will give me so much sincere satisfaction as to hear this, and to hear it from your own pen. My earnest and ardent desire is, that you would pursue any plan that is most likely to produce content, and a tolerable degree of tranquillity; as it must add

¹ The italics are mine.

greatly to my uneasy feelings to hear, that you are dissatisfied or complaining at what I really could not avoid.

"As life is always uncertain, and common prudence dictates to every man the necessity of settling his temporal concerns, while it is in his power, and while the mind is calm and undisturbed, I have, since I came to this place (for I had not time to do it before I left home) got Colonel Pendleton to draft a will for me, by the directions I gave him, which will I now enclose. The provision made for you in case of my death will, I hope, be agreeable."

Washington and a few officers departed from Philadelphia on horseback, accompanied a little way by many delegates, with their servants and carriages, a troop of light horse, and bands of music. He left General Schuyler in New York, which had a loyalist governor, and wrote him that he should not hesitate to order forcible measures if necessary, were it not that the Continental Congress was sitting "and the seizing of the governors quite a new thing"; so he referred the general to that body for direction. The need of treating Congress with deference at this period was increased by the general American dread of military power. While Washington was in New York he received an address from Congress, containing what Mr. Sparks calls "a broad hint to a military commander-in-chief," an expression of "the fullest assurance, that whenever this important contest shall be decided by that fondest wish of each

American soul, an accommodation with our mother country, you will cheerfully resign the important deposit committed into your hands and reassume the character of our worthiest citizen." Although Washington was always considerate of the civil authority, so jealous were the people, especially in New England, that but a little later he received a warning from a friend to treat the assembly with more respect. About his reception in Cambridge John Adams had written a significant hint in reference to powder: —

"I hope the utmost politeness and respect will be shown to these officers on their arrival. The whole army, I think, should be drawn up upon the occasion, and all the pride, pomp, and circumstances of glorious war displayed; — no powder burned, however."

Shortage of powder was the most terrible fact they had to face.

"Democracy," said Guizot, "requires two things for its tranquility and success; it must feel itself trusted and yet restrained, and it must believe at once in the genuine devotedness and in the moral superiority of its leaders."

To his intensely democratic army Washington was able to give much of that feeling even from the beginning. Lord Sandwich, in the debate of March 16th, 1775, remarked: "Suppose the colonies do abound in men, what does that matter? They are raw, undisciplined, cowardly men."

General Gage wrote, after the battle of Bunker Hill:—

“The trials we have had show the rebels are not the despicable rabble too many of us have supposed them to be, and I find it owing to a military spirit, encouraged among them for a few years past, joined with an uncommon degree of zeal and enthusiasm, that they are otherwise. When they find cover, they make a good stand. . . . In all their wars against the French, they never showed so much conduct, attention, and perseverance as they do now.”

Such was the material on which Washington was to work. On his way to Cambridge, when told of the battle of Bunker Hill, his first question was about the behavior of the militia, and he was informed that they held their ground; but just after reaching the army he received a letter informing him that several officers had shown cowardice, and he soon found them guilty of that and other crimes, among them frauds, both in pay and in provisions. To Richard Henry Lee he wrote:—

“It is among the most difficult tasks I ever undertook in my life to induce these people to believe that there is, or can be, danger till the Bayonet is pushed at their Breasts; not that it proceeds from any uncommon prowess, but rather from an unaccountable kind of stupidity in the lower class of these people which, believe me, prevails but too generally among the officers of the Massachusetts *part* of the Army who are *nearly* of the same kidney with the Privates, and adds not a little to

my difficulties; as there is no such thing as getting of officers of this stamp to exert themselves in carrying orders into execution — to curry favor with the men (by whom they were chosen, & on whose smiles possibly they may think they may again rely) seems to be one of the principal objects of their attention.”

There was the greatest jealousy between the officers and soldiers of different states. Massachusetts had the best reputation, but Washington did not fall in love with this New England character. To Lund Washington he expressed himself freely: —

“The people of this government have obtained a Character which they by no means deserved — their officers, generally speaking, are the most indifferent kind of people I ever saw. I have already broke one Colo. and five Captains for Cowardice & for drawing more Pay & Provisions than they had Men in their Companies — there is two more Colos. now under arrest, & to be tried for the same offences — in short they are by no means such troops, in any respect, as you are led to believe of them from the accts. which are published, but I need not make myself enemies among them, by this declaration, although it is consistent with truth. I dare say the Men would fight very well (if properly officered) although they are an exceeding dirty & nasty people. Had they been properly conducted at Bunkers Hill (on the 17th of June) or those that were there properly supported, the Regulars would have met with a shameful defeat, and a much more considerable loss than they did, which is now known to be exactly 1057 killed & wounded — it was for their behaviour on that occasion that the above officers were broke, for I never

spared one that was accused of Cowardice, but brot 'em to immediate Tryal," . . . "The Massachusetts People suffer nothing to go by them that they can lay hands upon."

To Joseph Reed he wrote:—

"Notwithstanding all the publick virtue which is ascrib'd to these people, there is no nation under the sun (that I ever came across) pay greater adoration to money than they do. . . .

"The party to Bunker's Hill had some good and some bad men engaged in it. One or two courts have been held on the conduct of part of it. To be plain, these people—among friends—are not to be depended upon if exposed; and any man will fight well if he thinks himself in no danger. I do not apply this only to these people. I suppose it is to be the case with all raw and undisciplined troops."

Among the general officers much trouble was made by professional jealousy, especially as the arrangement of them was, as Washington expressed it, injudicious. A glimpse into the condition of the army a few months later is vividly given in the diary of a private soldier:¹—

"10. There was two women Drumd out of Camp this forenoon. That man was Buried that Killed himself Drinking. . . .

"12. There was a man found Dead in a room with A Woman this morning. It is not known what Killed him.

"17. Lie't Chandler Broke out with the Small pox and was sent to the pest house this afterNoon."

¹ David How's Diary, Morrisonia, N. Y., 1865.

How the general met some of his problems is shown in this account of an incident, seen by Sullivan, which happened while Washington was at Cambridge:¹—

“One morning, while Sullivan was closeted with Washington at headquarters, on some mission from the house, Col. Glover, of the Marblehead regiment, which was encamped in an enclosed pasture north of the Colleges, came in to announce that his men were in a state of mutiny. Washington instantly strode to his horse, kept always in readiness at the door, leaped into the saddle, and, followed by Mr. Sullivan and Col. Glover, rode at full gallop to the camp. His servant, Pompey, sent in advance to let down the bars, had just dismounted for the purpose, when Washington, coming up leaped over Pompey, bars and all, and darted into the midst of the mutineers. It was on the occasion of the well-known contest between the fishermen of Marblehead and the Virginia riflemen under Morgan; the latter of whom, in half-Indian equipments of fringed and ruffled hunting shirts, provoked the merriment of the northern troops. From words they proceeded to blows, and soon at least a thousand combatants, armed for the most part only with snow-balls, were engaged in conflict. ‘The General threw the bridle of his horse into his servant’s hands, and, rushing into the thickest of the fight, seized two tall, brawny riflemen by the throat, keeping them at arm’s length, talking to, and shaking them.’”

This disturbance was instantly quelled, but of course such dramatic methods were seldom called for. It was mainly a routine of discipline. Even

¹ Amory, “Life of Sullivan,” I, 69.

critics who doubt Washington's greatness as a general admit his ability in the minute details needed to form an army, and this one rapidly improved under him, although he had difficulties in getting proper equipment or sufficient money. The troops were all raised for short terms, and it was hard to induce them to reënlist. Washington spoke of their "dirty, mercenary spirit." All the difficulties of introducing discipline and subordination into the army were, as Washington pointed out, vastly increased by the fact that it must be done in such proximity to the British, when an attack might be made at any time, and when he thought it wise to deceive the enemy in regard to his numbers. Each commander imagined the opposing army greater than it was. Much worse than any of these difficulties, however, was the terrible shortage of powder. So extreme was the dearth of this most necessary article that it determined the whole plan of campaign. It is reported that when Washington first heard of the shortage he did not utter a word for half an hour. Messengers were sent immediately to the Southern colonies to call in their stores. Firing about the camp was forbidden. Desperate enterprises were encouraged to secure powder. Everything must be done without letting the shortage become known to the enemy. At one time there was, as Washington said, scarcely

enough to serve the artillery in any brisk action a single day. The necessary secrecy led to unjust criticism of the commander, who was sensitive to it, but helpless. He had to endure what he called "the insult" of a cannonade without replying to it. Wet weather helped waste what little powder they had.

These two things alone—the lack of powder and the necessity of supplying the places of the men, who were enlisted for a few months, and could not be induced to remain, and of training new ones—made it apparently impossible to destroy the enemy. General Gage, who was in command of the British in Boston, was at least as little inclined to take the offensive, and as soon as the news of Bunker Hill reached England, he was ordered home, General Howe replacing him. The British were particularly troubled by lack of provisions, from which Washington took great pains to shut them off, as far as their command of the sea allowed. Mentioning this, he adds that he has done, "and shall continue to do, everything in my power to distress them," a phrase singularly like what George III. wrote to Lord North a few months later, "Every means of distressing America must meet with my concurrence."

The spirit was harsh enough on both sides, as it always must be in civil war. Washington spoke of the loyalists as "execrable parricides," although

he treated them properly. After the evacuation he wrote, "One or two have done what a great number ought to have done long ago, committed suicide."

The siege of Boston threw no particular light on Washington's powers as a general, but it showed his ability to improve an army and to deal tactfully with so jealous a master as the Continental Congress. Sensitiveness to public opinion, whether in the legislators or in the people, was a quality which he always showed, and nothing could be more needed in a country which had such an exaggerated dread of military authority, far greater at the beginning of the Revolution than it ever has been since. His care for the impressions which his actions produced on the public renders it difficult to fathom his motives during the long and tiresome siege. While he talked so constantly about the lack of powder, he was yet frequently urging an attack. Was this because he knew that the majority of his generals were against it, and by proposing it he could demonstrate, without risk, to the impatient part of the community how eager he was? Would he have urged it if the others had wished an attack? Would he then not rather have emphasized the dangers? We know at least that Howe wished to tempt the Americans to attack him. To Congress Washington wrote that his desire for some

prompt solution grew out of his sense of the heavy expense to which the country was being put,—a piece of tact merely, for he knew how much more frugal were the natives of New England and the Congress in military matters than he would have cared to be.

The attempt to dislodge the enemy was not made until early in March. The method was to send troops across in the night to build forts on Dorchester Neck, a position from which artillery could make Boston an impossible residence. In case there should be a discovery, Washington had his army so disposed that he felt that when the British attacked the troops on Dorchester Neck he could fall upon them with every prospect of success. There was no discovery, and a surprising amount of intrenchment was accomplished. A British officer compared this accomplishment to the deeds of Aladdin. General Howe told Lord Dartmouth that at least twelve thousand men must have been employed on the fortifications, and that the rebels had done more between evening and morning than his entire army could have done in a month. In reality the Americans at work did not exceed twelve hundred. Washington's training as a surveyor probably was of value in the conception and execution of this move. Its success convinced the British that they must leave Boston, and they were al-

lowed to do so, without molestation, on an agreement, it is generally believed, that they should go without attempting to injure the city. Washington said that he was rather disappointed that an engagement had not been brought on, although he would not lament, as he "was in a great measure a convert to Mr. Pope's opinion that whatever is, is right." The American troops took possession of the city, under the strictest orders against pillage.

John Adams moved that a vote of thanks and a medal be sent from Congress to Washington. Among the many congratulations were some from men who were to play strange parts later. Brigadier-General Benedict Arnold wrote from Montreal: —

"I heartily congratulate you on the success of your arms before Boston."

Major-General Charles Lee wrote: —

"I most sincerely congratulate you; I congratulate the public on the great and glorious event, your possession of Boston. It will be a bright page in the annals of America, and a most abominable black one in those of the beldam Britain."

Washington's spirit toward Great Britain in these months of waiting had grown more bitter, and he was by this time prepared for independence. Southey pictures Washington and George

III. patting each other on the back, so to speak, in the future world, and blaming for their difficulties those —

“Who for wicked ends, with foul arts of faction and falsehood,
Kindled and fed the flame.”

Among those who did most at this time to feed the flame was Thomas Paine, the author of “Common Sense.” On the last day of January Washington had written thus to Joseph Reed:—

“I hope my countrymen of Virginia will rise superior to any losses the whole navy of Great Britain can bring on them, and that the destruction of Norfolk and the threatened devastation of other places will have no other effect than to unite the whole country in one indissoluble band against a nation which seems to be lost to every sense of virtue and those feelings which distinguish a civilized people from the most barbarous savages. A few more of such flaming arguments as were exhibited at Falmouth and Norfolk, added to the sound doctrine and unanswerable reasoning contained in the pamphlet, *Common Sense*, will not leave numbers at a loss to decide upon the propriety of a separation.”

Washington said that the destruction of Falmouth exceeded “in barbarity and cruelty every hostile act practised among civilized nations,” and he saw in the burning of Falmouth the “barbarous designs of an infernal ministry.” He had now dropped the distinction between the king’s troops and the ministerial troops, and had written in November:—

"It has long been my political creed, that the ministry durst not have gone on as they did, but under the firmest persuasion that the people were with them."

The Americans, however, had some brilliant supporters in the mother country. David Hume was asked to draw up an address to the king, for the county of Renfrew, against the colonists. He refused, added that he sympathized with the Americans, and, referring to the king, said, "Tell him that Lord North, though in appearance a worthy gentleman, has not a head for these great operations, and that if fifty thousand men and twenty millions of money were intrusted to such a lukewarm coward as Gage, they could never produce any effect."

Another historian, Robertson, wrote, in the fall of 1775, that the Americans would gain freedom some time, but the day might be postponed if the British leaders would use all the power of the empire at once. Otherwise the struggle would be "long, dubious, and disgraceful. . . . If the contest be protracted, the smallest interruption of the tranquility that now reigns in Europe, or even the appearance of it, may be fatal."

Washington, in January, spoke of the "rancor and resentment" of the royal will, and used with italic sarcasm the words *most gracious* majesty. He said, "The throne, from which we had supplicated redress, breathes forth vengeance and in-

dignation, and a firm determination to remain unalterable in its purposes and to prosecute the system and plan of ruin formed by the ministry against us." According to his own account, Washington's last hope of reconciliation vanished when he heard of the measures taken in England after the fight at Bunker Hill. In the letter in which he made that statement he said that the "tyrant and his diabolical ministry" ought to be told clearly that if they persisted the Americans would "shake off all connection with a state so unjust and unnatural." By the time that Washington left Boston, on April, to follow the enemy to New York, hardly even Patrick Henry and Samuel Adams were more passionately hostile and determined to sever all ties.

CHAPTER IX

THE NEW YORK CAMPAIGN

"The conduct of our General, in avoiding a decisive action, is much applauded by the military people here, particularly Marshals Maillebois, Broglio, and D'Arcy." — FRANKLIN.

PASSING through Princeton, Norwich, and New London, to hasten the embarkation of troops, Washington reached New York on April 13th. As General Howe had not gone to that city, and as the British war vessels retired to Sandy Hook, there was no cause for immediate action, and Washington's principal task was to complete the work of defence begun by General Lee. While thus engaged he was called to Philadelphia to advise Congress about the best plans for the defence of the Colonies. He urged the necessity of engaging Indians, to keep them from joining the British, deeming their neutrality impossible; and, authorized to give the savages \$100 for every commissioned officer captured in the Indian country or on the frontiers, and \$30 for every common soldier, he advised that the most be made of this inducement. He also spoke for the

employment of Eastern and Northern Indians, as well as those of the far West. "It will prevent our Enemies from securing their friendship, and further they will be of infinite service in annoying and harassing them should they ever attempt to penetrate the country." Again, each side in high words condemned the other for doing what no efforts could keep from resulting in atrocities. Congress resolved, as President Hancock expressed it to Washington, "that such cruelty as shall be inflicted on prisoners in their possession, by savages or foreigners taken into pay by the King of Great Britain, shall be considered as done by his orders, and recourse be immediately had to retaliation." Related ethically to the employment of Indians, was the purchase by the British of Hessian troops, a measure which provoked in the Colonies the fiercest rage. Washington suggested the advisability of inducing certain loyal Germans to go among the mercenary allies of the enemy and breed discontent, and Congress passed a resolution offering all the rights of natives and fifty acres of land each to all soldiers who would desert. One thousand acres were to be given to a colonel, eight hundred to a lieutenant-colonel, and so down. George III. had shown compunctions when this subject was first broached. "The giving Commissions to German officers to get men I can by no means consent

to," he wrote to Lord North, "for it in plain English amounts to making me a kidnapper, which I cannot think a very honourable occupation." George III. sometimes showed as high a sense of mere probity as George Washington. The important differences between them were in wisdom and talents,—commodities in which the king was notably deficient.

Another subject discussed by Washington and the legislature at Philadelphia was the best method of improving affairs in Canada, where the results thus far had been disastrous to the Americans. Among the things advised by him was the kindest treatment of the inhabitants, to win at least their neutrality. "They have the character of an ingenious, artful people, and very capable of finesse and cunning. Therefore my advice is, that you put not too much in their power; but seem to trust them, rather than do it too far." Commenting on the character of General Sullivan, who was aiming at the command in Canada, Washington, in one of the numerous passages in which he succinctly and frankly summed up officers, said:—

"That he does not want abilities, many members of Congress as well as myself, can testify; but he has his wants, and he has his foibles. The latter are manifested in a little tincture of vanity, and in an over desire of being popular, which now and then leads him into

embarrassments. His wants are common to us all — the want of experience to move upon a large scale ; for the limited and contracted knowledge, which any of us have in military matters, stands in very little stead, and is greatly overbalanced by sound judgment, and some knowledge of men and books, especially when accompanied by an enterprising genius, which, I must do General Sullivan the justice to say, I think he possesses."

Soon after this, the American army was driven out of Canada. When Washington remonstrated with General Gates for the abandonment of Crown Point, he received a reply absolutely impertinent. Gates described the bad state of his own army, and contrasted it with the condition of the troops under Washington's command. The reply of the commander-in-chief was brief and temperate, " By the by, I wish your description perfectly corresponded with the real circumstances of this army." Charles Lee wrote to Washington, " I am extremely happy, dear General, that you are at Philadelphia, for their counsels sometimes lack a little military electricity." Washington was able to furnish electricity, and he supplemented it with unusual tact toward all with whom he had to do.

The most important subject at Philadelphia was the question of changing the contest from one for the redress of certain grievances to one for independence. The opposition to independence in the Southern colonies must have done

much to extend Washington's sympathy, and to prepare him for a national rather than a Virginian point of view. The reverent attitude toward royalty was fast disappearing. The welcome given to Paine's "Common Sense" helps to show how fast the American point of view towards monarchs was changing. In March Washington wrote, "The opinion for independency seems to be gaining ground; indeed most of those who have read the Pamphlet (Common Sense) say it's unanswerable." Paine treated George III. as an enemy to America. In July the statue of the king was pulled down and mutilated in Broadway, an act which called out a reprimand from Washington, as it bore the appearance of a riot. In June, while Washington was in Philadelphia, Congress gave him a banquet, at which some of the toasts were:—

"5. The protesting lords. 7. Mr. Burke. 18. May the ruins of the British Empire crush those who undermine its pillars. 19. May no injuries erase from our bosoms the sentiments of humanity. 23. May the generous sons of St. Patrick expel all the venomous reptiles of Britain."

The feeling of independence carried the day, and a formal declaration was made. The cautious Congress omitted Jefferson's attack on the British people, and also his strong condemnation of the slave-trade.

"Our Northern brethren," adds Jefferson, "also, I believe, felt a little tender under these censures, for though their people had very few slaves themselves, yet they had been considerable carriers of them to others."

Even the astute Franklin regretted the mildness of the result. When the draft of the declaration was forwarded to Washington, who had returned to New York, he, following the request of Congress, read it to the troops, and, as he stated it, "seemed to have their most hearty assent." In France it was accepted with ignorance and enthusiasm. Mirabeau wondered if those who hailed it had really read it, and Lafayette remarked with a smile that they had announced a principle of national sovereignty from which they would soon hear at home.

During the period of awaiting developments at New York, Washington gave considerable attention to the Tories. In the orderly book for May 10th, 1776, we read:—

"Joseph Child of the New York Train of Artillery, tried at a late General Court Martial whereof Col. Huntington was President, 'for defrauding Christopher Stetson of a dollar, also for drinking damnation to all Whigs and Sons of Liberty, and for profane cursing and swearing.' The Court finding the prisoner guilty of profane cursing and swearing, and speaking contemptuously of the American army, do sentence him to be drum'd out of the Army."

After Howe arrived in June, and established his headquarters on Staten Island, the general dissatisfaction with the American cause became great. The danger was increased, and Washington sent away his wife who visited him frequently throughout the war. He arrested a great many suspected citizens, or, as he called them, "disaffected Persons of the most diabolical dispositions and Intentions," taking care, however, that they should be well treated. The discontent was increased by the fact that Howe, who was popular in America, brought with him proposals for peace, which Congress would not entertain.

The British troops on Staten Island amused themselves by burning in effigy numerous prominent Americans. One day a thunder-storm came before the work of preparation was completed. In the evening the effigies were lighted. All burned, except that of Washington, which remained as good as ever after the tar burned off. The Hessians were frightened, until it was explained to them by the officers that as it had no tar on it before the rain the wood became saturated with water and would not burn.¹

Washington, from the beginning, had small hope that he could permanently hold New York against the enemy. On July 22d he calculated that besides a powerful fleet, in full view of his

¹ Moore, *Diary of Am. Rev.*, I, 277.

army, the enemy had eight or nine thousand men on Staten Island, a number likely soon to be increased to twenty-five thousand, while he would have about fifteen thousand. His view generally expressed was, that the British could take the city after considerable loss; but at one time he told the President of Congress that he had had for some time no doubt of defending the town. In this letter he said:—

“If we should be obliged to abandon the town, ought it to stand as winter-quarters for the enemy? They would derive great conveniences from it on the one hand; and much property would be destroyed on the other. It is an important question, but will admit of but little time for deliberation. At present, I dare say the enemy mean to preserve it, if they can. If Congress, therefore, should resolve upon the destruction of it, the resolution should be a profound secret, as the knowledge of it will make a change in their plans.”

Congress promptly ordered him to do no damage to the city. General Greene wrote in favor of destroying the city, as “two thirds of the property of the city and suburbs belong to the tories,” and John Jay favored wholesale destruction.

Washington's greatest difficulties grew out of the quality of his army. He was in constant fear of their becoming panic-stricken and running away. He was troubled by “scattering, unmean-

ing, and wasteful fire from our people at the enemy—a kind of fire that tended to disgrace our own men as soldiers, and to render our defence contemptible in the eyes of the enemy.” He was afraid that even the shrieks of women and children would have an unhappy effect on the ears and minds of his young and inexperienced soldiery. Desertions were frequent and difficult to prevent. Jealousies between the troops of various provinces continued. It was not easy to keep the soldiers from wronging the inhabitants, although the commander threatened the offenders with drastic punishment. In such a state of discipline it was deemed unwise to make any general attack on Staten Island.

At this time Lord Howe sent a message under a flag, with certain proposals, to “George Washington, Esq^{re}.” Through Washington’s directions the messenger was informed that there was no such person in the army, and the general received the thanks of Congress for acting with a dignity becoming his station.

Anticipating the possibility that the British, when they were ready to attack New York, might do it by way of Long Island, Washington had placed troops in Brooklyn and built fortifications. This position was attacked on August 27th and carried, more than one thousand Americans, including the two commanders, Lord Sterling and

General Sullivan, being captured. Washington crossed to the island during the action, but he did not dare to bring over any troops from New York. A heavy rain and a wind so strong that the ships could not ascend the harbor helped him to get the rest of the detachment to New York. He conducted the retreat, which was made on the morning of the 30th, with such skill that the last boat was crossing the river before the enemy, part of whom were within six hundred yards, discovered the move. It is said that for forty-eight hours during this movement Washington did not close his eyes, and seldom dismounted. For the surprise which the British were able to effect he has sometimes been blamed, although he was not in immediate command; but for the retreat he has always received the highest praise. General Greene called it the best-effected retreat he ever read or heard of, considering the difficulties. This first serious reverse brought out the famous phrase of Fox, "The terrible news from Long Island." Washington confessed his want of confidence in most of the army, and said that no dependence could be put on a militia, or other troops raised for so short a time. The soldiers in general were "filled with apprehension and despair," the militia were "dismayed, intractable, and impatient to return." They went off almost by whole regiments at a time.

Washington's plans, under these conditions, were dilatory merely. Experience had confirmed the opinion that the war should be defensive, and he was disappointed in the way the soldiers defended even strongly fortified posts. "The honor of making a brave defence does not seem to be a sufficient stimulus, when success is very doubtful, and the falling into the enemy's hands probable." It was obvious after the battle of Long Island that New York must be evacuated whenever it might be bombarded, and Washington was prepared to leave at any moment, especially as it was feared that the enemy intended to get in the rear and cut off communications. Washington himself was at Harlem, where, on September 15th, the sound of guns told him that there was fighting to the south. The enemy had begun its movement to take possession of the city. When Washington reached the East River, he found his troops flying in confusion, almost without firing a shot. General Heath relates in his *Memoirs*:—

"About noon, the British landed at Kepp's Bay. They met with but small resistance, and pushed towards the city, of which they took possession in the afternoon. . . . Here the Americans, we are sorry to say, did not behave well; and here it was, as fame hath said, that General Washington threw his hat on the ground, and exclaimed, 'Are these the men with which I am to defend America?'"

James Thatcher, in his Military Journal, relates that when Washington could not rally the troops, he drew his sword and snapped his pistols, and was in such danger that one of his officers seized the reins of his horse and gave him a different direction. General Greene wrote:—

“Fellows’s and Parsons’s brigades ran away from about fifty men, and left his Excellency on the ground within eighty yards of the enemy, so vexed at the infamous conduct of the troops that he sought death rather than life.”

Tench Tilghman, an aide, with whom Washington was unusually intimate, wrote to his father the day after this retreat:—

“Our army is posted as advantageously as possible for security, out of reach of the fire of the ships from either river, and upon high ground of difficult access. I don’t know whether the New England troops will stand there, but I am sure they will not upon open ground. I had a specimen of that yesterday. Hear two brigades ran away from a small advance party of regulars, tho the General did all in his power to convince them they were in no danger. He laid his cane over many of the officers, who showed their men the example of running. These were militia. The New England Continental troops are much better.”

Robert Morris, soon to play so important a part in aid of his country, wrote a few days after Washington’s recklessness:—

“My confidence in the abilities of General *Washington* is entire. His life is the most valuable in *America*;

and whenever an engagement happens, I sincerely hope he will think how much depends on it, and guard it accordingly."

Most of the heavy cannon, and part of the stores and provisions, were necessarily abandoned. Washington, in his reports, charged the troops severely with the most ignoble cowardice. He encamped upon the heights of Harlem, a position so strong that he thought even tolerable resolution would defeat any attempt to take it. A favorable skirmish soon put some cheerfulness into the soldiers. At this time the northern part of New York was set on fire in the night, and about a quarter of the city destroyed. Governor Tryon wrote to Lord George Germaine: —

"Many circumstances lead to conjecture that Mr. Washington was privy to this villainous Act, as he sent all the bells of the churches out of town, under pretense of casting them into cannon."

This charge has not been accepted by historians, but we have already seen that it was Congress and not Washington who decided not to burn this city.

About this time Washington made the acquaintance of a very young man, who was to play a high part in his commander's future career. Washington was inspecting an earthwork which this youth superintended. Receiving an impression favorable to the young officer, he invited him

to the tent of the commander-in-chief¹ and began an acquaintance which advanced rapidly. Of Hamilton, as he appeared at this period, the first impression of a veteran officer of the Revolution has been preserved by Washington Irving: —

“I noticed a youth, a mere stripling, small, slender, almost delicate in frame, marching beside a piece of artillery, with a cocked hat pulled down over his eyes, apparently lost in thought, with his hand resting on the cannon, and every now and then patting it as he mused, as if it were a favorite horse or a pet plaything.”

At Harlem, according to Washington, one-quarter of his troops were ill. An eye-witness, General Heath, says that there were ten thousand sick, with such poor hospital accommodation that in almost every barn, stable, shed, and even under the fences and bushes, they could be seen, showing their distress in their faces. Dr. Thatcher, who showed the commander through the hospitals, said that Washington was “always tenderly disposed to spare the lives of his soldiers,” and that in the hospitals “he appeared to take a deep interest in the situation of the sick and wounded soldiers, and inquired particularly as to their treatment and comfortable accommodations.” Tilghman, always ardent in praise of Washington, wrote to his father: —

¹ Of Hamilton, “History of the Republic,” Vol. I, p. 129.

"I never saw any man so strictly observant of the preservation of private property. He never fails to punish any breach that comes under his observation, but I am sorry to say that most of his officers do not keep up the same discipline."

This same member of Washington's military family wrote:—

"You can have no idea of the General's merits and abilities without being with him. Few words serve him, but they are to the purpose, and an order once given by him is obeyed through every department."

Also:—

"I take your caution to me in regard to my health very kindly, but I assure you you need be under no apprehension of my losing it on the score of excess in living. That vice is banished from this army, and the General's family in particular. We never sup, but go to bed early, and are early up. The New England troops are the only sick ones, and a good deal of that is laziness."

Again:—

"The Virginia and Maryland troops bear the palm. They are well officered and behave with as much regularity as possible, while the Eastern people are plundering everything that comes in their way. An Ensign is to be tried for marauding to-day. The General will execute him, if he can get a court-martial to convict him."

It should be remarked, in favor of New England, that Tilghman was, like his commander, a Southerner. John Adams wrote more generally:

"The spirit of venality you mention is the most dreadful and alarming enemy America has to oppose. It is as rapacious and insatiable as the grave. . . . This predominant avarice will ruin America, if she is ever ruined."

Adams also noticed the bad discipline of the troops, and introduced into Congress a resolution ordering the commander-in-chief to take certain measures to improve it, an implied censure which Washington took quietly, and answered fully, blaming the Congress for not establishing the army upon a permanent footing and giving the officers good pay.

"When men are irritated and their passions inflamed, they fly hastily and cheerfully to arms; but, after the first emotions are over, to expect among such people as compose the bulk of an army that they are influenced by any other principles than those of interest is to look for what never did, and I fear never will happen; and, till the bulk of your officers is composed of such persons as are actuated by principles of honor and a spirit of enterprise, you have little to expect from them."

Until the officers were a different class from the soldiers, discipline, Washington thought, would be impossible. Joseph Reed wrote to his wife October 11th:—

"It is impossible for any one to have an idea of the equality which exists between the officers and men who compose the greater part of our troops. You may form some notion of it when I tell you that yesterday morn-

ing a captain of horse, who attends the General, was seen shaving one of his men on the parade near the house."

Social equality, however, proved no very terrible injury to discipline in the American civil war.

Washington said that what little discipline he had been able to introduce had been in a manner done away with by the mixture of troops called together in the last few months. He argued for a standing army, and said that he could declare upon oath his belief that the militia did more harm than good. General Charles Lee, who was always fiery in talk, commented thus to General Gates: "*Inter nos* Congress seem to stumble at every step. I have been very free in delivering my opinion to them. General Washington is much to blame in not menacing them with resignation, unless they refrain from unhinging the army by their absurd interference." Plundering was one of the greatest evils, and this also Washington attributed to the poor quality of the officers, caused by bad pay and temporary service. Calm as he was in his manner toward Congress, Washington wished posterity to know the truth, and he put the same facts much more sharply to Lund Washington, with the hint, "If I fall, it may not be amiss that these circumstances be known, and declaration made in credit to the justice of my character."

Finally, early in October, Howe sent two ships and a frigate up the Hudson, to cut off supplies from that direction, and soon after landed most of his troops on the mainland, left some at Harlem, and proceeded slowly with the rest to the high ground at East Chester and New Rochelle. At a council of war it was decided by the Americans to leave New York Island, but to retain Fort Washington on the east side of the North River. After dividing his army to protect the removal of his stores, Washington drew it all together at White Plains to be ready for a general attack. A number of skirmishes took place, in the principal one of which, October 27th, at Chatterton's Hill, the British were successful. Of Washington in this skirmish a little picture has been preserved for us by General Heath. In the forenoon a heavy cannonading was heard toward Fort Washington. From the American camp, to the southwest, there appeared to be a commanding height worthy of attention. Washington ordered those general officers who were off duty to attend him in reconnoitring this ground. On closer approach, it did not seem so commanding, and General Lee pointed to other land which looked superior to it. The generals were on the way thither, when a light-horseman rode up at full gallop, and thus addressed Washington:—

“The British are on the camp, sir.”

The general turned to his companions:—

“Gentlemen, we have now other business than reconnoitring.”

So saying he touched the spurs to his horse and went off at full gallop, followed by the other generals. At headquarters he learned that the guards had been all beaten in, and that the army was in order of battle. He turned to his officers, and merely said, “Gentlemen, you will repair to your respective posts, and do the best you can.”

Howe did nothing to follow up his advantage, and after a few days Washington withdrew to some hills which were so strong that Howe gave up all idea of attacking him, and took his army off toward the Hudson and Kingsbridge. His first move was to take Fort Washington and over twenty-eight hundred prisoners, a feat which he accomplished with little trouble. That this loss to the Americans was the result of an important error in military strategy, has never been doubted. Washington reported that the preservation of the passage of the North River was an object of such consequence that he determined, “agreeably to the advice of most of the general officers, to risk something to defend the post.” He ordered Colonel Magaw, who was left in command of the fort, to defend it to the last, but afterward, “reflecting upon the smallness of the garrison, and the diffi-

culty of their holding it, if General Howe should fall upon it with his whole force," he wrote General Greene, who had command of the Jersey shore, to "govern himself by circumstances." Greene was in favor of holding on.

To John Augustine Washington, General Washington gave a different coloring to the story, saying that the fort at the last was held contrary to his wishes and opinion. To Joseph Reed he described the affair three years later in a way which, while showing the views of Greene and of Congress, admits his lack of decision, "that warfare in my mind, and hesitation, which ended in the loss of the garrison." This mistake caused much hostile criticism, and it is probably the clearest example which Washington ever gave of the occasional evil results of too little confidence in his own judgment. General Charles Lee wrote to General Gates, after the capture of the post: —

"Between ourselves, a certain great man is most damnably deficient. . . . Our councils have been weak to the last degree."

Joseph Reed wrote to General Lee that it was entirely owing to Lee that the army was not entirely cut off. Referring to the Fort Washington error, he remarked: —

"General *Washington's* own judgment, seconded by representations from us, would, I believe, have saved the

men and their arms; but, unluckily, General *Greene's* judgment was contrary. This kept the General's mind in a state of suspense till the stroke was struck. Oh, General, an indecisive mind is one of the greatest misfortunes that can befall an army; how often have I lamented it this campaign."

Lee himself, about this time, on another point, with characteristic impudence, thus wrote to Washington:—

"Oh, General, why would you be overpersuaded by men of inferior judgment to your own? It was a cursed affair."

Howe following up his successes, Washington moved toward the Delaware, his army constantly decreasing. Pursued by a detachment under Lord Cornwallis, he crossed the river, and as Howe made no further move, there was quiet for about three weeks. During this time, General Lee, who had acted almost in direct insubordination to the orders of the commander-in-chief, was captured by a party of light horse—"taken by his own imprudence," Washington said. As Lee had been in the British army, he was held as a deserter by General Howe, until Washington threatened retaliation unless he was treated as a prisoner of war, whereupon Howe, after consulting with Lord George Germaine, yielded the point.

Washington's situation at this time was prob-

ably at least as discouraging as at any period during the war. Robert Morris wrote on December 1st:—

“Our people knew not the hardships and calamities of war when they so boldly dared Britain to arms; every man was then a bold patriot, felt himself equal to the contest, and seemed to wish for an opportunity of evincing his prowess; but now, when we are fairly engaged, when death and ruin stare us in the face, and when nothing but the most intrepid courage can rescue us from contempt and disgrace, sorry am I to say it, many of those who were foremost in noise, shrink coward-like from the danger, and are begging pardon without striking a blow.”

Washington himself wrote in November:—

“The different States, without regard to the qualifications of an officer, quarrelling about the appointments, and nominating such as are not fit to be shoeblacks, from the local attachments of this or that member of Assembly.”

About how officers ought to be selected he gave these precise directions:—

“Take none but gentlemen; let no local attachments influence you . . . recollect, also, that no instance has yet happened of good or bad behavior in a corps in our service that has not originated with the officers. Do not take old men, nor yet fill your corps with boys, especially for captains.”

“I have labored, ever since I have been in the service, to discourage all kinds of local attachments and distinctions of country, denominating the whole by the greater name of AMERICAN, but I have found it impossible to overcome prejudices.”

New Jersey and Pennsylvania showed small devotion to the cause, and the prospect of having a proper army in the spring, upon which everything would depend, did not look rosy. On December 20th Washington wrote to Congress, that ten days more would put an end to the existence of the army. Before those ten days were gone, however, something happened.

CHAPTER X

FROM TRENTON TO VALLEY FORGE

"He resembled Marcellus rather than Fabius, notwithstanding his rigid adherence to the Fabian policy during the war."—GENERAL CHARLES LEE.

WASHINGTON realized the importance of public opinion, and knew that the public mind would be depressed by the loss of Philadelphia. Howe was alive to the same fact. Congress, likewise, conceived the idea of influencing the general spirit by resolving that they would not leave Philadelphia, a resolution which was, on Washington's advice, wisely suppressed, since that body soon gave various exhibitions of nervousness. As the British advanced Congress adjourned to Baltimore. "The fatal consequences that must attend its loss," wrote Washington, referring to Philadelphia, "are but too obvious to every one." He felt that, for the sake of holding up the courage of the country, some desperate blow must be struck.

During his retreat across the Delaware a pamphlet had been written called "The Crisis," by

Thomas Paine, who was in the retreat, and read to groups of the dispirited and suffering soldiers. The opening sentences read:—

“These are the times that try men’s souls. The summer patriot and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he that stands it *now*, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman. Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered.”

Later, it said:—

“Voltaire has remarked that King William never appeared to full advantage but in difficulties and in action; the same remark may be made on General Washington for the character fits him. There is a natural firmness in some minds which cannot be unlocked by trifles, but which, when unlocked, discovers a cabinet of fortitude.”

This last sentence sounds like a prophecy, and the first sentence, “These are the times that try men’s souls,” was the watchword on the night after Christmas, 1776. Washington wrote thus:

“Christmas-day at night, one hour before day, is the time fixed upon for our attempt on Trenton. For Heaven’s sake, keep this to yourself, as the discovery of it may prove fatal to us; our numbers, sorry I am to say, being less than I had any conception of; but necessity, dire necessity, will, nay must, justify *any* attempt.”

On Christmas night Washington prepared his troops to cross the river, and to fall before morning on a detachment of the enemy’s troops encamped near Trenton. During the night a great

deal of ice had formed, and it impeded the boats so much that the artillery, which Washington had hoped to get across by midnight, was not all on the other side until three. As it was almost four before the troops took up their line of march, Washington now despaired of surprising the town, since it would be daylight before the troops could march the nine miles; yet if he retreated across the river, he would be discovered and harassed. He determined to march on at any risk. He divided the detachment into two divisions, to go by separate roads, force the outguards, push directly into the town, and charge the enemy before they had time to form.

The upper division arrived at the enemy's advance posts exactly at eight o'clock, and three minutes later the fire on the lower road told the chief that the other division had also arrived. The outguards, though few, kept up a constant retreating fire from behind houses. Soon the Americans saw the main body of the enemy form in a confused manner that showed they hardly knew how to act. They attempted to file off toward Princeton. Washington, seeing their intention, threw a body of troops in their way. Surrounded, they lay down their arms, 23 officers and 886 men. Nearly half escaped, who would have been taken, Washington thinks, had not the ice prevented General Ewing from crossing the

river and taking possession of the bridge leading out of Trenton. As the ice had also prevented other troops under General Cadwalader from crossing, and as his men were very tired, Washington thought it prudent to return that evening to his camp.

He waited there three days, and on the 29th, in spite of ice that hindered boats, and would not allow passage on foot, crossed again. The difficulties of passage gave the enemy an opportunity to prepare, and Washington feared an attack by a superior force. Yet he wished to avoid the appearance of a retreat. He ordered all the baggage to be silently removed to Burlington, soon after dark; and at midnight, renewing the fires, to deceive the enemy, he marched by a roundabout road to Princeton, where he knew the British could not have much force left. Arriving about sunrise, he found only three regiments and three troops of light-horse, which he fell upon, inflicting a total loss that he estimated at about five hundred. The fatigue of his troops again led him not to attempt more.

In these engagements he again exposed himself, to give valor to his troops. An officer who was in the fights wrote:—

“Our army love their General very much, but they have one thing against him, which is the little care he takes of himself in any action. His personal bravery,

and the desire he has of animating his troops by example, makes him fearless of danger. This occasions us much uneasiness. But Heaven, which has hitherto been his shield, I hope will still continue to guard so valuable a life."

Frederick the Great is reputed to have called the Trenton campaign the most brilliant of the century. "*Ambuscade, surprise, and strategem,*" said General Heath, commenting on these battles, "are said to constitute the sublime part of the art of war . . . all have the same object, namely, to deceive."

Washington took a position at Morristown, commanding the road from New York to Philadelphia. Hoping that the enemy would be led to go into winter quarters, without attempting to recover the lost ground in the Jerseys, he wrote to Reed that the numbers "ought to be a good deal magnified," and to Putnam, "You will give out your strength to be twice as great as it is."

He received in his letters many references to what he had accomplished.

From Robert Morris:—

"The year 1776 is over, I am heartily glad of it, and hope you nor America will ever be plagued with such another."

From John Hancock, President of Congress:—

"As it is entirely to your wisdom and conduct the United States are indebted for the late success of their

arms, the pleasure you must naturally feel on the occasion will be pure and unmixed."

From General Benedict Arnold:—

"I beg leave, though late, to congratulate your Excellency on your success at Trenton. It was a most happy stroke and has greatly raised the sinking spirits of the country."

The result was marked and immediate. Before these battles of Trenton and Princeton the militia of New Jersey were frightened, the militia of Pennsylvania disaffected, and the people so little favorable to the patriot cause that, in the retreat of over one hundred miles, the American army was joined by less than one hundred men. "In short," said Washington in December, "the conduct of the Jerseys has been most infamous." After these victories the inhabitants, who had been badly treated by the foreign troops, especially the Hessians, began to pull down the red rags which they had nailed to their doors as tokens of loyalty to Great Britain. Washington's most extreme expressions were habitually of depression, never of elation. When the cause was darkest, he said that if need be he would retreat beyond the Susquehanna River, and thence, if necessary, to the Alleghany Mountains; and he is reported to have said that, sooner than yield, he would found a new empire on the banks of the Mississippi.

Light-Horse Harry Lee relates that Washington, speaking of death, would often remark that, if the choice were his, he would be unwilling to pass through life again. In his nature, always melancholy, there was a limit to the differences of mood that could be caused by success or failure. In flashes he showed discouragement, but on the whole his spirit, in failure and success, was to do the best that could be done, and leave the rest to Providence.

A glimpse of him as he looked to the eye, at the period of these victories, may be had from a description left by a man who saw him three days before the crossing of the Delaware: —

“His nose was apt to turn scarlet in a cold wind. He was standing near a small camp-fire, evidently lost in thought and making no effort to keep warm. He seemed six feet and a half in height, was as erect as an Indian, and did not for a moment relax from a military attitude. . . . He had a piece of woollen tied about his throat and was quite hoarse. . . . Washington’s boots were enormous. They were number 13. His ordinary walking shoes were number 11. His hands were large in proportion, and he could not buy a glove to fit him and had to have his gloves made to order. His mouth was his strong feature, the lips being always tightly compressed. That day they were compressed so tightly as to be painful to look at.”

“He was an enormous eater, but was content with bread and meat if he had plenty of it. But hunger seemed to put him in a rage.”

Unflushed by success, Washington proceeded with calmness along the lines most likely to serve his cause. His love of action—like his shrinking from criticism, his desire of public approval, his passions, and the general signs of his sensitive and emotional nature—was held in check with wonderful self-control. That the public esteem, which was so largely increased by this success, was already high, is shown by the action of Congress, before the news from Trenton, in making him practically dictator, at his own request. In making the suggestion, after recounting the bad results of referring everything to Congress, he went on:—

“It may be said, that this is an application for powers that are too dangerous to be entrusted. I can only add, that desperate diseases require desperate remedies; and I with truth declare, that I have no lust after power, but I wish with as much fervency as any man upon this wide-extended continent for an opportunity of turning the sword into the ploughshare.”

Greene also favored the dictatorship. He wrote to the President of Congress:—

“The virtue of the people, at such an hour, is not to be trusted; and I can assure you that the General will not exceed his powers, though he may sacrifice the cause. There never was a man that might be more safely trusted, nor a time when there was a louder call.”

Congress resolved that for six months Washington was to have almost unlimited power in all military matters. Differences still arose, nevertheless. "I heartily wish Congress would inform me of the dispositions they make of the troops. Their not doing it disconcerts my arrangements and involves me in difficulties." Another instance of sharp difference of opinion comes out in these lines to Robert Morris:—

"The resolve to put in close confinement Lieutenant-Colonel Campbell and the Hessian field-officers, in order to retaliate General Lee's punishment upon them, is, in my opinion, injurious in every point of view, and must have been entered into without due attention to the consequences. Does Congress know how much the balance of prisoners is against us; that the enemy have, at least, three hundred officers of ours in their possession, and we not fifty of theirs?"

At the same time he was doing his best, diplomatically, to see that our prisoners received proper treatment, and John Adams gave this opinion of his conduct:—

"Washington is in the right, and has maintained his argument with a delicacy and dignity which do him much honor: He has hinted at the flagitious conduct of the two Howes towards their prisoners in so plain and clear a manner that he cannot be misunderstood, but yet decency and delicacy are preserved."

To General Stephen, Washington wrote:—

"I lament Captain Conway's loss; but tho' my Indignation at such ungenerous Conduct of the Enemy might

at first prompt me to Retaliation, yet Humanity & Policy forbid the measure. Experience proves that their wanton Cruelty injures rather than benefits their Cause; That, with our Forbearance, justly secures to us, the attachment of all good men."

He knew, with Henry, that the gentler gamester was the soonest winner.

An announcement, expressive of the enemy's angry view of the dictatorship, appeared in *Gaines' Mercury*, February 3d, 1777:—

"It is confidently reported in London, that the Congress have devolved all their power upon Mr. Washington, and appointed him dictator, in example of the Romans. The reason, if the fact be true, is very apparent. They find themselves in a slippery situation, and are glad to throw their burden upon the first simpleton of consequence that would take it. Washington has now no mean character to support. He must be the *first* or *last* of men, who would accept power upon such terms. But as the Congress are desperate, so is this gentleman. As the first instance of this protectorship, he has ordered all persons to take an active part in his concerns, and for the support of his authority, under pain of confiscation of all their properties."

Another Tory organ, the *New York Gazette*, in the course of violently relieving its feelings about one of Washington's proclamations, showed the general tendency to expect more of him than of others.

"That Mr. Washington, who *once* was esteemed a gentleman, should forfeit that character by becoming the tool of

an impracticable ambition, is a matter of commiseration; but, that he should be so contaminated by the vice of his associates as to lose all regard to the common forms of morality, all dignity of sentiment, and decency of conduct, was not to have been expected from a man who owned the least pride, or felt the least consciousness of virtue. . . . 'Tis an old and true observation, *Magistratus indicat Virum*, 'the Ruler shows the Man'; and we have nothing more to learn of this famous Mr. Washington."

Howe's offer of pardon to all who would agree not to take part against the king had been sufficiently successful to lead Washington to a countermove, which was, however, sharply criticised, even by patriots, so strong was the jealousy of one-man power. The proclamation ordered everybody who had signed Howe's agreement to deliver up the certificate of protection, and take the oath of allegiance to the United States, granting, however, permission to any who preferred the king's cause to go within the British lines. Tory charges, that he failed to carry out this permission, are founded on no evidence, and is against all his principles. Tilghman thus wrote to his father, on February 22d:—

"If it pleases God to spare the life of the honestest man that I believe ever adorned human nature, I have no doubt of it. I think I know the sentiments of his heart, and in prosperity and adversity I never knew him utter a wish or drop an expression that did not tend to

the good of his country, regardless of his own interest. He is blessed wherever he goes, for the Tory is protected in person and property equally with the Whig. And indeed I often think more, for it is his maxim to convert by good usage and not by severity."

The condition of the army was constantly getting worse. Liquor was short, and had to be denied the troops except when they were employed on tiring duty. The Eastern troops continued to be, as Washington said, "most wretchedly officered." The commissary department, recently organized, was deplorable. A Tory journal printed a rumor that Washington had to tie up his breeches with strings, having parted with the buttons to buy the necessaries of life.

When we hear too much about the degenerate public morality of our day and country, it might be well to read what Robert Morris wrote at this time to Washington:—

" . . . they are grown the most mercenary beings that exist.

"I do not confine this observation to the soldiery merely, but extend it to those who get their livings by feeding and entertaining them. These are the harpies that injure us much at this time. They keep the fellows drunk while the money holds out; when it is gone, they encourage them to enlist for the sake of bounty, then to drinking again; that bounty gone, and more money still wanted, they must enlist again with some other officer, receive a fresh bounty and get more drink, &c."

The militia continued to be of very little use. The commander said of them:—

“If the Militia cannot be prevail’d upon to restrain the Foraging parties and to annoy and harass the Enemy in their excursions, and upon a march they will be of very little use to us, as I am sure they can never be brought fairly up to an attack in any serious matter.”

Soon after the Jersey victories Washington thus described his army:—

“All our movements have been made with inferior numbers, and with a mixed, motley crew, who were here to-day, gone to-morrow, without assigning a reason, or even apprizing you of it.”

He was naturally, therefore, more than ever anxious to hide his real weakness. To Congress he wrote:—

“I need not suggest to Congress the necessity of keeping our numbers concealed from the knowledge of the public. Nothing but a good face & false appearances have enabled us hitherto to deceive the enemy respecting our strength.”

If we are to get an intimate feeling of Washington’s temperament, we can hardly contrast too often his practices with his view of similar conduct in the British:—

“Some accounts make their loss in killed and wounded nearly 500, but the truth of this I do not undertake to vouch for, as they are equal to Indians in concealing their loss, by a removal of their dead, and were they to take up the business of scalping they would much

resemble savages, in every respect!—so much is the boasted generosity, and Glory of Britains fallen!”

At every step we see irascibility under the control of will.

For his volunteers, Washington had particular contempt, as “uneasy, impatient of command, ungovernable,” claiming superior merit and the right to think and do as they pleased. Under his various disadvantages, he thought it best to risk nothing more for some time, and after the winter had gone quietly, and the spring had passed without important incidents, there was considerable complaint. One of the discouraging aspects of the situation was the behavior of the officers. Some had to be reasoned with over imaginary slights, others reprimanded for arguing instead of obeying. Some were reported to Congress for withholding the pay of their soldiers. A complicated problem grew out of the presence of foreign officers, who now began to pour in. Washington’s own attitude was always suspicious of foreigners. Among the officers from France, the greater number, he was convinced, “were adventurers,” as swarms were sent over, with little recommendation, by the American representatives in France, with promises of commissions. He wished to oblige France, as Congress did, but feared the effect of so much added inefficiency. Of the foreign officers only two proved of great value. One was Baron

Steuben, whose skill in drill rapidly improved the discipline of the army. In accomplishing his task, he gave rein to his emotional nature, and added what English expletives he had acquired to his German and French.

“Venez, Walker, mon ami! Sacre de gaucherie of dese badauds; je n'en puis plus! I can curse dem no more!”

The other useful *récruit* was a man of twenty, whom the reserved commander took immediately to his heart. At a dinner in France some talk about the Declaration of Independence suggested to a guest that the American cause was one in which a worthy and theatrical part might be played by a youth at once moral, dashing, and ambitious. He had been much at the French court, and had, according to so high an authority as Prince Talleyrand, acquired a gentleness and suavity of manner which, even at the height of the Revolution, he never lost; and doubtless these manners were part of the charm which he exercised over the form-loving and aristocratic Washington, who met him at a dinner in Philadelphia, soon after his arrival in America. Another attraction was his dash, a quality by which Washington was always pleased. Lafayette had escaped from France in disguise, with the government emissaries on his track, taking his future in his own hands, and leaving his young wife with one child,

and expecting another. This high-spirited adventurer, finding that Congress was inclined to treat him a little coldly, explained that he wished to serve without pay, a suggestion which changed the views of the legislators and helped him to win the confidence of Washington, to whom the lust for glory seemed a much higher quality than the lust for gold. Napoleon, who had been opposed by Lafayette in 1815, said at St. Helena:—

“Lafayette was a man of no ability, either in civil or military life; his understanding was confined to narrow bounds; his character was full of dissimulation, and swayed by vague ideas of liberty, which, in him, were undefined and ill-digested.”

Under this portrait by an enemy lies the truth that Lafayette was more winning than strong. He was brave and graceful, and Washington soon made him useful.

Lafayette says in his Memoirs:—

“General Washington came to Philadelphia. There, for the first time, M. de Lafayette saw this great man. Although surrounded by officers and citizens, the majesty of his face and form made it impossible to mistake him. He was no less distinguished by his affable and noble greeting. M. de Lafayette returned his compliments. Invited by the General to establish himself in his household, he has from that day looked upon it as his own, and with this simplicity were united two friends whose liking and confidence were strengthened by the greatest interests.”

This was his first impression of the troops:—

“Some miles from Philadelphia (the army) was waiting until the enemy’s movements were decided. The General reviewed them. M. de Lafayette arrived the same day. About 11,000 men, rather badly armed, dressed still worse, made a singular spectacle. In this motley and often naked state the best garments were hunting shirts, of grey cloth, used in Carolina. . . .

“‘We ought to be embarrassed,’ said Gen. Washington, on arriving, ‘to show ourselves to an officer who has just left the French troops.’

“‘It is to learn and not to teach that I am here,’” replied M. de Lafayette, and this tone succeeded, because it was not common among the Europeans.”

He received a commission as major-general, and, although Congress intended the rank to be merely honorary, Lafayette was anxious for a command, and Washington was inclined to give him one, as soon as he had fairly tested him, partly because he learned to see his uses at the French court. After Lafayette was wounded, in a rather gallant endeavor to stop the retreat at Brandywine, Washington interested himself more actively in getting him a command, saying that at that battle he showed “a large share of bravery and military ardor.” Later he wrote to Washington:—

“The only favor I have asked of your Commissioners in France has been, not to be under any orders but those of General Washington. I seem to have had an anticipation of our future friendship; and what I have done

out of esteem and respect for your Excellency's name and reputation, I should do now out of mere love for General Washington himself."

The principal object of the commander-in-chief, during 1777 was to make Howe think he had a large force, while at the same time he made, if possible, his critics and Congress understand that his lack of success, for a long time after Princeton, was due to small numbers and bad equipment. The Howes were not active. Possibly they feared the American militia as much as Washington mistrusted it. General Lee's explanation of their lack of enterprise was that Sir William Howe had never recovered from the effect of Bunker Hill, where he had seen the trained British regulars fail to show the expected superiority to the rawest militia. They kept Washington marching hither and thither, trying to guess the destination of the fleet and army, until midsummer, when their intention to attack Philadelphia became clear. Although Washington looked upon the loss of this city as a misfortune, John Adams wrote to his wife as early as June 2d: "I had rather they should come to Philadelphia than not. . . . This town has been a dead weight upon us. It would be a dead weight upon the enemy." This sounds much like Franklin's famous answer, when told that Howe had taken Philadelphia, "Philadelphia has taken

Howe." Washington, in August, halted his army at Germantown, and gave orders that no soldier or officer should enter Philadelphia, as "it will only tend to debauch them." He had come from his position in the Jerseys, which covered the North River and Philadelphia, because the cry was so great for the protection of the seat of Congress. The first clash came on September 11th, when the advancing British crossed the Brandywine and attacked the American right. As the information he had been able to get about their movements was uncertain and contradictory, Washington had not been able to dispose his troops favorably, and those first engaged were forced to retire before they could be reënforced. Meantime, another division of the enemy crossed the river and attacked Wayne's division, which also retired. Washington, at midnight, weary with much exertion, directed Pickering to write to Congress. He read the letter, approved it, and "with perfect composure," as Pickering relates, directed him to add a consolatory hope that another day would give a more fortunate result.

Greene, whose division had covered the retreat, asked that his soldiers might receive recognition, but Washington refused to mention the division in his report, saying, it is related by Custis: "You, sir, are considered in this army as my favorite officer; your division is composed of

southrons, my more immediate countrymen. Such are my reasons."

Lafayette in his Memoirs gives a glimpse of Washington's personal behavior during these movements: —

"After having threatened the Delaware, the English fleet had again disappeared. During several days it was the subject of jests, which ceased when it arrived in the Chesapeake. To be near the point of disembarking the patriot army crossed the City. Their heads ornamented with green branches, marching to the sound of the drum and fifes, before the eyes of all the citizens, these soldiers, despite their nudity, made a pleasant sight. The general shone at their head, M. de Lafayette at his side. The army took its position on the heights of Wilmington, and that of the enemy disembarked in Elk River, at the foot of Chesapeake bay. The very day that it landed, Gen. Washington exposed himself very imprudently. After a long reconnoissance he was assailed by a storm, on a very dark night. He entered a farmhouse, very near the enemy, and his unwillingness to change his mind kept him there, with Gen. Greene, M. de Lafayette, and their aides; but on leaving at daybreak, he admitted that the most insignificant traitor could have been his destruction."

To a protesting correspondent, however, Washington made no such admission: —

"Accept my sincere thanks for your Sollicitude on my Acct., and for ye good advice contained in your little paper of the 27th Ultó. — at the same time that I assure, you that It is not my wish to avoid any danger which duty requires me to encounter. I can as confi-

dently add, that it is not my intention to run unnecessary risques. In the Instance given by you, I was acting precisely in the line of my duty, but not in the dangerous situation you have been led to believe. I was reconnoitring, but I had a strong party of Horse with me. I was, as (I afterwards found) in a disaffected House at the head of Elk, but I was equally guarded agt. friend and Foe. The information of danger, then, came not from me."

Washington calculated that his loss was not greater than that of the enemy. He rested his army a few days, and then prepared to attack the British, but was prevented by a heavy rain. Howe soon after advanced toward Philadelphia with a force estimated at eight thousand, the regular continental troops being about the same number, with three thousand militia. A council of war near the end of September decided by ten to five against an attack. Many of the men were barefoot, and the inhabitants were disaffected. Cornwallis entered Philadelphia (at the head of the British vanguard), September 26th, the band playing "God save the King." Most of the Quakers received the victors cordially, and the mass of loyalists were in high spirits, but the Americans were not as discouraged as it had been feared they would be. As the Americans, stationed with their defences on the Delaware, interrupted Howe's communications with the sea, he was preparing to attack them, and dividing his forces for the purpose, when

Washington decided to fall upon him unawares. He marched all night to Germantown, where the main body of the British was encamped, and fell upon it at sunrise, October 4th, with a bayonet charge. The British were surprised and thrown into confusion. A thick fog, made worse by the powder, caused the American troops to mistake their own regiments for British, a panic resulted, and they fled, apparently losing twice as many men as the enemy. All estimates are made more difficult by Washington's habit of reporting the losses with a view to the effect rather than to accuracy.

Both armies remained quiet for some time, Washington earnestly hoping for good news from the North, where General Burgoyne was on the brink of destruction. Pickering,¹ who never saw the general's equanimity desert him in disaster, was present when he was overcome by the tidings from the North. Rumors of General Gates's victory had already begun to float about, and it was hinted that if they were true Washington's days as commander-in-chief were numbered. These suggestions had reached Washington. On October 18th, he read an account of the victory. Not a word was spoken. "Washington unfolded the document, and proceeded to read it aloud,

¹ See Pickering to Peters, "Life of Pickering," Vol 2, p. 107 *seq.*

Pickering and Palfrey watching his expression. As he read, his voice began to falter, his articulation became slow, and broke under the intensity of his feelings; as it became apparent that the letter was announcing the surrender of Burgoyne and his entire army, he could read no more, but passed it to Colonel Palfrey, signifying that he wished him to finish it, which he did aloud."

As he concluded, Washington lifted his hands and face toward heaven, with an expression of gratitude.

A council of war, on October 29th, decided against attacking the British in Philadelphia, but Washington spread the report that, heavily reënforced by troops from General Gates and by militia, he intended to attack the city. "Next to being strong," he said, "it is best to be thought so." Nearly a month later, November 24th, another council of war was held, and again it was decided unwise to attack. Washington believed that Howe was preparing to move against him, as he was. No decisive move was made, however, and Washington considered the subject of winter quarters. Congress wished a winter campaign, but was finally satisfied that before any active movement could be made the regular army must be increased. At this time Mrs. Washington wrote to a friend: "The General is well, but much worn with fatigue and anxiety. I never

knew him to be so anxious as now, for the poor soldiers are without sufficient clothing and food, and many of them are barefooted."

The condition of the army, and its movements toward winter quarters, are graphically struck off in a diary kept by Dr. Waldo, a surgeon, on the army, from which the following are extracts:¹—

"Dec. 6. Our men were under Arms all Day and this Night also—as our Wise General was determined not to be attacked Napping."

"Dec. 8. Provision & Whiskey very scarce. Were Soldiers to have plenty of food and Rum, I believe they would Storm Tophet. . . . We were remanded back with several draughts of Rum in our frozen bellies—which made us so glad we all fell a Sleep in our open huts—nor experienced the Coldness of the Night 'till we found ourselves much stiffened by it in the morning."

"Dec. 11. I am prodigious Sick & cannot get any thing comfortable—what in the name of Providence can I do with a fit of Sickness in this place where nothing appears pleasing to the Sicken'd Eye & nauseating Stomach. But I doubt not Providence will find out a way for my relief. But I cannot eat Beef if I starve—for my stomach positively refuses such Company, and how can I help that?"

"Dec. 12. We are ordered to march over the River. It snows—I'm Sick—eat nothing—No Whiskey,—No Baggage—Lord—Lord—Lord. The Army were 'till Sun Rise crossing the River—some at the Waggon Bridge & some at the Raft Bridge below. Cold & Uncomfortable."

¹ *Hist. Mag.*, Vol. 5, p. 129 seq.

“Since we are to Winter here — 1st. There is plenty of Wood and Water. 2ndly. There are but a few families for the soldiers to Steal from. . . . 4ly. There are warm sides of Hills to erect huts on. 5ly. They will be heavenly Minded like Jonah when in the belly of a great Fish. 6ly. They will not become home Sick as is sometimes the Case when Men live in the Open World. Since the reflections which must naturally arise from their present habitation, will lead them to the more noble thoughts of employing their leizure hours in filling their knapsacks with such materials as may be necessary on the Journey to another Home.”

“Dec. 14th. I am sick — discontented and out of humour. Poor food — hard lodging — Cold Weather — fatigue — Nasty Cloaths — nasty Cooking — Vomit half my time — Smoak’d out of my senses — the Devil’s in’t — I can’t Endure it . . . all Confusion — smoke Cold — hunger & filthyness. A pox on my bad luck. Here comes a bowl of beef Soup — full of burnt leaves and dirt, sickish enough to make a hector spue — away with it Boys.”

“Dec. 22. The Lord send that one Commissary of Purchases may live on, Fire Cake & Water, ’till their gluttet Gutts are turned to Paste-board.”

“Dec. 26th. Why don’t his Excellency rush in and retake the City, in which he will doubtless find much Plunder? Because he knows better than to leave his Post and be catch’d like a d—d fool coop’d up in the City.”

He thinks that Washington by his skirmishes, has

“made many proselytes to the Shrine of Liberty by these little successes — and by the prudence — calmness — sedateness — & wisdom with which he facilitates all his Operations.”

He also speaks with approval of his not throwing away the lives of his soldiers, & says it ought not to be called an inglorious campaign.

“Dec. 19. So much talk about discharges among the Officers — & so many are discharged — his E—y lately expressed his fears of being left Alone with the Soldiers only.”

On December 23d, Washington reported 2899 men unfit for duty on account of nakedness. Lacking blankets, the soldiers had to sit up by the fires at night. Yet this terrible winter had its uses. Valley Forge was on the western side of the Schuylkill, in the first step of the hills which reach to the Blue Ridge, a position very strong and also convenient to fertile country. Washington kept his main body compactly there, in huts, believing it gave a better opportunity for improvement in discipline than would be offered in any town, suffering for his soldiers, but probably not wholly regretting that Howe's soldiers were enjoying the demoralizing pleasures of Philadelphia.

CHAPTER XI

ENEMIES AND FRIENDS

“Why should I expect to be exempt from censure, the unfailing lot of an elevated station? Merit and talents, with which I can have no pretensions of rivalry, have ever been subject to it. My heart tells me, that it has been my unremitted aim to do the best that circumstances would permit; yet I may have been very often mistaken in my judgment of the means, and may in many instances deserve the imputation of error.” — WASHINGTON.

WHILE encamped at Valley Forge, Washington saw the most serious designs ever made against him reach their height. Long in formation, they were nourished in the main by the same human weaknesses that made men weary of hearing Aristides called the Just. Can we wonder at the defection of lesser minds, when one so powerful as John Adams, with every facility for knowing the inner facts, had fallen away from his approval of the commander? He, “the main-mast” of the ship of state, was, with his New England jealousy of power, surfeited with Washington’s praises and eager for change. When Burgoyne surrendered to Gates, Adams wrote to his wife: —

“Congress will appoint a thanksgiving; and one cause of it ought to be, that the glory of turning the

tide of arms is not immediately due to the Commander-in-Chief nor to Southern troops. If it had been, idolatry and adulation would have been unbounded; so excessive as to endanger our liberties for what I know. Now, we can allow a certain citizen to be wise, virtuous, and good without thinking him a deity or a saviour."

In a manuscript sketch, by Dr. Benjamin Rush, Adams is quoted in debate as follows:—

"I have been distressed to see some of our members disposed to idolize an image which their own hands have molten. I speak of the superstitious veneration which is paid to General Washington."

Adams was one of the men who had recommended Gates for the almost independent command in the North. The New England delegates signed the paper, which was written by Samuel Adams, in this order: John Adams, Nathaniel Folsom, Samuel Adams, Henry Marchant, Elbridge Gerry, E. Dyer, William Williams, and it is to be assumed that all of these men were now hostile to the commander-in-chief. It is related that when Burgoyne entered Gates's tent, after the surrender at Saratoga, he proposed the health of Washington, probably not knowing with how little cordiality the toast was received. To be fair to Adams, it should be remembered that in his autobiography, he takes the trouble to deny his complicity in this Conway cabal, "because that insolent blasphemer of things

sacred and transcendent, libeller of all that is good, Tom Paine, has more than once asserted in print that I was one of a faction, in the fall of the year 1777, against General Washington." Probably he went no further than his own words prove him to have gone. The impression that he was in a plot, however, so far prevailed in the army that Lafayette, intimate as he was with Washington, mentioned both of the Adamses, as well as Francis Lightfoot Lee and Richard Henry Lee, as belonging to the Gates party, although he is said later to have modified this opinion. Hamilton spoke of the cabal as existing "in the most extensive sense," called it a monster, and attributed its failure to get rid of Washington to the fact that it "unmasked its batteries too soon." The only members absolutely known to have been concerned in the movement are Major General Conway, from whom the cabal takes its name, Thomas Mifflin, the Quartermaster-General, and Gates. Gates and Mifflin, when they joined the service, professed to be the commander's friends, and it was mainly through Washington's influence that Congress overcame its prejudice against English-born citizens enough to make exceptions of Gates and Charles Lee. At Cambridge, Washington felt compelled to refuse commands which they desired, to Gates and to Mifflin. After

Gates received the appointment to the North, he was even insulting. He refused to send Washington reënforcements requested, and even failed to report to him, communicating the news of his victories to Congress alone. There were in Congress so many members either opposed to the chief personally, or jealous of the great military power granted him, that a board of war, of which Gates and Mifflin were members, was constituted, in order to divide the power with him. One of their moves was to plan an expedition to Canada, which never came to anything, and which Washington privately called "the child of folly," and to offer the command of it to Lafayette, in the hope of attaching him to their cause; but the loyal young Frenchman kept Washington informed of all he learned. He visited Gates, found him at table with his friends, and, as the guests were about to leave the table, emphasized his sentiments by proposing one toast that had been omitted, "the commander-in-chief." Immediately after Burgoyne's surrender, General Daniel Morgan, as he related himself, going to see Gates on business, was informed by that worthy that the army was extremely dissatisfied with Washington. Morgan sternly requested him not to mention that subject again, and added that he should never serve under any other commander. Another

friend, who helped Washington to desirable information, was Henry Laurens, who, as President of Congress, instead of reading to that body an anonymous attack on the general, containing the phrase, "the people of America have been guilty of idolatry, in making a man their god," sent it to Washington, who said in his reply:—

"My enemies take an ungenerous advantage of me. They know the delicacy of my situation, and that motives of policy deprive me of the defence I might otherwise make against their insidious attacks. They know I cannot combat their insinuations, however injurious, without disclosing secrets which it is of the utmost moment to conceal."

That Dr. Benjamin Rush was warmly in the movement is almost certain. Washington attributed to him an anonymous attack, dated January 12th, 1778, addressed to Patrick Henry, who immediately sent it to the commander-in-chief.— After Burgoyne's surrender Rush wrote to John Adams:—

"I have heard several officers who have served under General Gates compare his army to a well regulated family. The same gentlemen have compared Gen'l Washington's imitation of an army to an unformed mob. Look at the characters of both! The one on the pinnacle of military glory—exulting in the success of schemes planned with wisdom, & executed with vigor and bravery—and above all see a country saved by their exertions. See the other outgenerald and

twice beaten — obliged to witness the march of a body of men only half their number thro' 140 miles of a thick settled country — forced to give up a city the capitol of a state & after all outwitted by the same army in a retreat. If our congress can witness these things with composure, and suffer them to pass without an enquiry, I shall think we have not shook off monarchial prejudices, and that like the Israelites of old we worship the work of our hands."

Washington apparently realized from the beginning that the community was with him. The principal opposition was among legislators. As early as February, 1777, debates in Congress showed a considerable number of members hostile to the general. The method in which the movement finally went up in smoke was rather dramatic. General Conway, the chief conspirator, was a boastful foreigner, foisted into high rank by Congress against the wishes of the commander-in-chief, who had warned Richard Henry Lee that Conway's promotion would "give a fatal blow to the existence of the army," and even went so far as to hint at resignation, if Conway should be promoted, but Congress nevertheless made him a major-general. When Washington received sufficiently definite material for action, he sent this laconic note to Conway:—

"SIR: A letter which I received last night contained the following paragraph.

" "In a letter from General Conway to General Gates

he says, *Heaven has been determined to save your country, or a weak General and bad counsellors would have ruined it.*' I am, Sir, your humble servant."

Lord Sterling first told Washington about the letter, which was afterward seen by Lafayette. Conway tried various lies to escape the consequences of this discovery, but it was too late, and publicity meant the speedy death of the cabal. Conway soon found his position untenable, and returned to Europe. The dissatisfied party did not dissolve all at once, however. On December 1st, 1779, General Sullivan wrote to Washington that the cabal still existed, and was endeavoring to persuade Congress to divide the power among three or four commanders answerable only to Congress. "Could you have believed, four years since, that those adulators, those persons so tenderly and friendly used, as were Gates, Mifflin, Reed, and Tudor, would become your secret and bitter, though unprovoked, enemies?" It was after the exposure, too, that John Laurens wrote to his father:—

"I think, then, the Commander-in-chief of this army is not sufficiently informed of all that is known by Congress of European affairs. Is it not a galling circumstance, for him to collect the most important intelligence piece-meal, and as they choose to give it, from gentlemen who come from York? Apart the chagrin which he must necessarily feel at such an appearance of slight it should be considered that in order to settle his plan of

operations for the ensuing campaign he should take into view the present state of European affairs, and Congress should not leave him in the dark.

"If ever there was a man in the world whose moderation and patriotism fitted him for the command of a republican army, he is, and he merits an unrestrained confidence."

A fact mentioned by Laurens is that Washington thought arming the negroes a resource that should not be neglected. The enthusiastic young man wished to free his own slaves, in order to arm them, and Washington's only objection to that grew out of "pity for a man who would be less rich than he might be." Some use was made of the blacks a little later. Over the employment of Indians, meantime, the usual recrimination went on. It was at Washington's suggestion that Morgan's famous riflemen imitated the savages.

"It occurs to me, that, if you were to dress a company or two of true woodsmen in the right Indian style, and let them make an attack accompanied with screaming and yelling, as the Indians do, it would have very good consequences, especially if as little as possible were said or known of the matter beforehand."

In his suggestions to a committee of Congress, dated January 28th, 1778, he remarked:—

"The enemy have set every engine at work against us, and have actually called savages, and even our own slaves to their assistance;—would it not be well to employ two or three hundred Indians against General Howe's army the ensuing campaign?"

Negotiation, meantime, was accomplishing much on the French mind, especially as conducted by Benjamin Franklin, "that insidious man," as he was called by King George. His Majesty, who in the preceding June had written Lord North, "in my opinion, the Americans will treat before winter," now began to doubt the possibility of conquest. He began to see a little danger that the warning words of Chatham might be true:—

"You cannot conquer the Americans! You talk of your powerful forces to disperse their army; why—" here he raised, and showed, the support to his gouty limbs — "I might as well talk of driving them before me with this crutch! . . . You have got nothing in America but stations. You have been three years teaching them the Art of War, and they are apt scholars."

On the day before the news of Saratoga arrived in England, Gibbon wrote as follows to Holroyd from the House of Commons: "There seems to be an universal desire for peace, even on the most humble conditions. Are you still fierce?" After the news he wrote: "Dreadful news indeed. . . . A general cry for peace." He had already observed, "The Americans (they have almost lost the appellation of rebels)." George III. wrote to Lord North in January, "Perhaps the time may come when it will be wise to abandon all North America but Canada, Nova Scotia, and

the Floridas, but then the generality of the nation must see it first in that light, but to treat with independence can never be possible." When he heard of the Conway cabal, however, he thought that the "discontent among the leaders" in America might facilitate the task of bringing "that deluded country" to some reasonable ideas.

In spite of the favorable trend of European sentiment, and the encouragement given to the Americans by Burgoyne's surrender, there was so much discontent, growing largely from the slowness of Congress in meeting the needs of the army, that in March Washington wrote to the President of Congress that since August between two and three hundred officers had resigned their commissions. The desertions among the starved and frozen soldiers were many, and the horses died for lack of forage. Happily, the situation was lightened by treaties of commerce and alliance, made between the United States and France on February 6th. The impression grew in England that only Lord Chatham could save the situation, but the king was unwilling to accept "that perfidious man" as prime minister. He declared that he would surrender the crown first. Washington's own reputation in Great Britain must have been increased by the enthusiasm of the popular General Burgoyne, who, in Parliament, on his return,

read a letter from the American commander, and added, "I think the letter, though from an enemy, does honor to the human heart." To Washington he wrote, "I find the character, which I before knew to be respectable, is also perfectly amiable; and I should have few greater private gratifications in seeing our melancholy contest at an end, than that of cultivating your friendship." Washington replied amiably. Knowing the favorable opinion of the American troops which Burgoyne had formed after his surrender, and fearing he might see things which would lead him to change his mind, Washington had endeavored to induce Congress to send him home as quickly as possible. Possibly Burgoyne's enthusiasm over Washington would have been slightly cooled had he known that it was he who suggested to Congress that the British army should be forced to pay for their provisions in coin, although by the articles of surrender they were to pay at the same rate as the Americans, who paid in paper; thus forcing three times the amount really agreed upon. In several respects Burgoyne was treated dishonestly by Congress, but he probably had no reason to suspect the complicity of Washington, who, indeed, was innocent except in this one suggestion, which shows the great and virtuous leader taking one of his few liberties with the moral law. "The payment, too, I should appre-

hend," Washington wrote, "ought to be in coin, as it will enable us to administer some relief to our unfortunate officers and men who are in captivity," — a virtuous end, no doubt, although a Jesuitical means. It is no wonder that the indignant Burgoyne imagined that Great Britain would not hesitate to pay thirty thousand pounds "to publish such a procedure to the world." Many readers will be shocked at such advice from their inhuman hero, and doubtless resentful that a biographer should relate it, but they will be no worse off if they realize that Washington was a man, although a strong and earnest one, with emotions, interests, temptations. War was hell then, as it is now. It inflamed the passions, jaundiced the vision, and often darkened the heart. Washington suffered with his soldiers, and came near to hating his enemies. Big things enraged him, and little things irked him. Heroism becomes no less real when heroes become human. The profane world has no name of better inspiration than the name of Washington. His errors are trifles, his moral victories greater even than his external success, and his glory that of a man, with all a man's inner difficulties, and almost more than a man's strength to triumph over them.

In France Washington's name was rapidly increasing in honor, and during the year a medal was issued, struck at Paris, in 1778, by direction

of Voltaire, with the legend, "*Washington réunit par un rare assemblage les talens du guerrier et les vertus du sage.*"

The French alliance was celebrated at Valley Forge, and an officer who was present at the ceremonies wrote:—

"When the General took his leave, there was a universal clap, with loud huzzas, which continued till he had proceeded a quarter of a mile, during which time there were a thousand hats tossed in the air. His Excellency turned round with his retinue, and huzzaed several times."

The offers contained in Lord North's so-called conciliatory bills, which removed certain taxes and provided for commissioners to treat for peace, were unanimously rejected by Congress, on the ground that they did not meet American expectations, and that the United States would treat with no British commissioners unless the fleets and armies were withdrawn. Washington called them "a compound of fear, art, and villainy, and these ingredients so equally mixed, that I scarcely know which predominates."

He wrote quite confidently to his friends, in these Valley Forge days, and gave (to his stepson) the probability of securing independence as a reason for holding his land.

On June 18th a change in the situation was produced by the evacuation of Philadelphia by the

British, whose destination was unknown. General Arnold, who had not yet entirely recovered from a wound received at Saratoga, was sent into the city, where he began living with ostentation, involving himself in pecuniary difficulties. Of the plan pursued by the detachments which crossed the Delaware and pursued the British, Hamilton wrote:—

“When we came to Hopewell Township, the General unluckily called a council of war, the result of which would have done honor to the most honorable society of midwives, and to them only. The purport was, that we should keep at a comfortable distance from the enemy, and keep up a vain parade of annoying them by detachment. In pursuance of this idea, a detachment of 1500 men was sent off under General Scott to join the other troops near the enemy’s lines. General Lee was *primum mobile* of this sage plan; and was even opposed to sending so considerable a force. The General, on mature reconsideration of what had been resolved on, determined to pursue a different line of conduct at all hazards.”

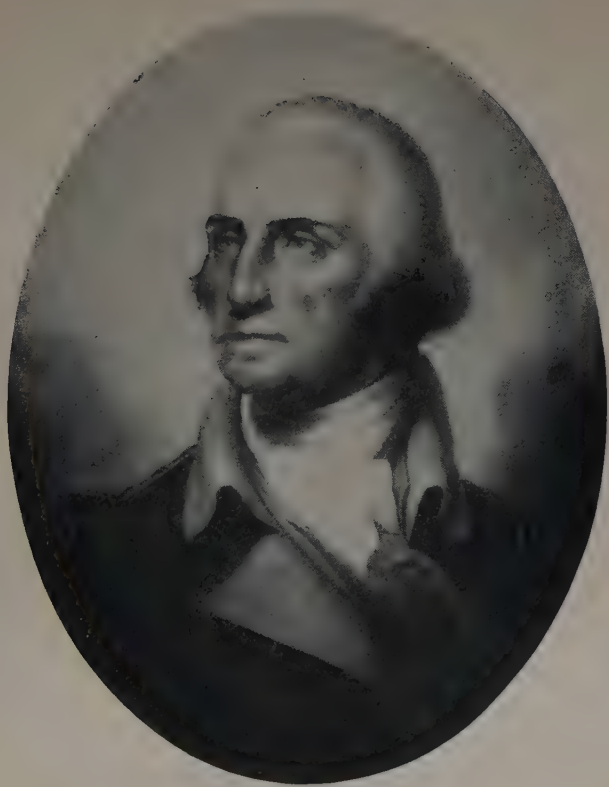
Greene, Lafayette, and Wayne declared in writing that they favored drawing the enemy into a general engagement, if it could be done under proper circumstances. Washington was probably of this opinion, for political reasons. He gave command of all of the advance forces to Lafayette after Lee had refused the post. Lee, however, soon changed his mind, putting Washington in a difficult position, from which he was freed by the

amiability of Lafayette, who gave up the command to Lee. Washington by this time had less confidence in Lee than he had at the beginning of the war. "His temper and plans were too versatile and violent to attract my admiration," he wrote. At Valley Forge, when Washington was administering the oath of allegiance to the general officers, by order of Congress, Lee is said to have hesitated, on this ground, "As to King George, I am ready enough to absolve myself from all allegiance to him, but I have some scruples about the Prince of Wales." The surrounding officers burst into laughter, even Washington smiled, and Lee took the oath.

One of the officers most devoted to Washington was the dashing General Morgan, who told the following story, probably relating to these days before the battle of Monmouth,¹ when the armies were near together, the British encamped at Monmouth Court-House, the Americans six or seven miles away. Washington called the leader of the riflemen to him, at night, and said:—

"I have sent for you Colonel Morgan, to entrust to your courage and sagacity, a small but very important enterprise. I wish you to reconnoitre the enemy's lines, with a view to your ascertaining correctly the positions of their newly constructed redoubts; also of the encampments of the British troops that have lately arrived, and

¹Custis, "Recollections," p. 310 *seq.*



GEORGE WASHINGTON

From a portrait by Rembrandt Peale. Painted in September, 1795. In the possession of W. B. Coleman, Esq.

those of their Hessian auxiliaries. Select, sir, an officer, non-commissioned officer, and about twenty picked men, and under cover of the night proceed with all possible caution, get as near as you can, learn all you can, and by day-dawn retire and make your report to headquarters. But mark me, Colonel Morgan, mark me well: On no account whatever are you to bring on any skirmishing with the enemy. If discovered, make a speedy retreat; let nothing induce you to fire a single shot. I repeat, sir, that no force of circumstances will excuse the discharge of a single rifle on your part, and for the extreme preciseness of these orders, permit me to say that I have my reasons." Filling two glasses of wine, the general continued, "And now, Colonel Morgan, we will drink a good night, and success to your enterprise."

Morgan accomplished his task. While resting on the grass, during their return, the soldiers saw some British horse ride along the road, as if directly into their unintended ambushade. The temptation was too strong, and the Americans fired. After they reached the camp, Morgan was reflecting upon his offence, when Hamilton appeared on horseback and accosted the colonel with, "I am ordered, Colonel Morgan, to ascertain whether the firing just now heard proceeded from your detachment."—"It did, sir," replied Morgan. "Then, Colonel, I am further ordered to require your immediate attendance upon his Excellency, who is fast approaching." Morgan bowed, and Hamilton, wheeling his horse, galloped back to rejoin his commander.

Washington arrived. "Can it be possible, Colonel Morgan, that my aide-de-camp has informed me aright? Can it be possible, after the orders you received last evening, that the firing we have heard proceeded from your detachment? Surely, sir, my orders were so explicit as not to be easily misunderstood." Morgan uncovered, and replied: "Your excellency's orders were perfectly well understood; and, agreeably to the same, I proceeded with a select party to reconnoitre the enemy's lines by night. We succeeded even beyond our expectations, and I was returning to headquarters to make my report when, having halted a few minutes to rest the men, we discovered a party of horse coming out from the enemy's lines. They came up immediately to the spot where we lay concealed by the brushwood. There they halted, and gathered up together like a flock of partridges, affording me so tempting an opportunity of annoying my enemies that — that — may it please your excellency — flesh and blood could not refrain."

Washington forgave him, and Morgan explained: "What could the unusual clemency of the Commander in Chief towards so insubordinate a soldier as I was mean? Was it that by attacking my enemy wherever I could find him, and the attack being crowned with success should plead in bar of the disobedience of a positive

order? Certainly not. Was it that Washington well knew that I loved, nay, adored him above all human beings? That knowledge would not have weighed a feather in the scale of his military justice. In short, the whole affair is explained in five words: *it was my first offence.*"

Possibly, also, part of the explanation lay in the fact that Washington loved daring and successful fighters, like Morgan, Arnold, and Wayne, as he loved dashing and cultivated young men, like Hamilton, Laurens, and Lafayette. He was the same man who had once spoken enthusiastically of the bullets whistling about him.

CHAPTER XII

MONMOUTH AND AFTER

“Where is virtue, where is patriotism, now; when almost every man has turned his thoughts to gain and pleasures, practising every art of change-alley or Jonathans; when men of abilities disgracefully neglect the important duties for which they were sent to Congress, tempted by the pitiful fees of practising attorneys; when members of that body artfully start a punt, succeed, and then avail themselves of the secrets of the House, and commence monopolizing and accumulate the public debt for their private emoluments?”—HENRY LAURENS, President of Congress.

A BATTLE was expected almost immediately. The night before the fight a party of the general officers resolved upon a memorial to the chief, praying that he would not expose his person in the approaching conflict. This memorial was to be presented by Washington's old companion in arms, Dr. Craik, who assured the officers that it would do no good. He then related the old Indian's prophecy, and confessed to his belief in its truth. On the following day, while the commander-in-chief, attended by his officers, was reconnoitring the enemy from an elevated part of the field, a shot from the British artillery struck a short distance from the horse's feet, throwing the earth over his person. Baron Steuben,

shrugging his shoulders, exclaimed, "Dat wash very near," while Dr. Craik, pleased with this confirmation of his faith in the Indian's prophecy, nodded to the officers who composed the party of the preceding evening, and then, pointing to Heaven, seemed to say, in the words of the savage prophet, "The Great Spirit protects him; he cannot die in battle."¹

At five o'clock on the morning of June 28th, Washington learned that the British had begun to march. He sent orders to Lee to begin the attack on them, unless there should be very powerful reasons to the contrary, and promised to come up to his support. Lee moved nearer to the enemy, apparently with the intention of attacking. A party of British troops came toward his right flank, and gave what looked to Lafayette like a fair opportunity of cutting it off. The Marquis rode up to Lee, and asked if an attack could not be made in that quarter.

"Sir," replied Lee, "you do not know the British soldiers; we cannot stand against them; we shall certainly be driven back at first, and we must be cautious."

Lafayette replied that British soldiers had been beaten before, and he soon after sent word to Washington that his presence was extremely desirable.

¹ Custis, "Recollections," p. 222.

Before Washington received this message, he met American soldiers, who told him that they were retreating by order of Lee. Washington in surprise and anger rode forward until he found his second in command, when he expressed his astonishment at the unaccountable retreat, to which Lee replied "that the attack was contrary to his advice and opinion in council."¹

During the hotly spoken words, Hamilton, present as aide, leaped from his horse, and, drawing his sword, cried, "We are betrayed; your excellency and the army are betrayed, and the moment has arrived when every true friend of America and her cause must be ready to die in her defence."

Washington, excited as he was, had no taste for melodrama.

"Col. Hamilton," he said, "you will take your horse."²

The chief then ordered Lee to the rear. Sending certain officers to check the advance, he formed the second line himself. A white charger, which he was riding for the first time, wearied, sank under him, and died. Washington mounted a chestnut blood-mare, which his servant Billy was leading, and on this he rode along the line, urging the men to receive the enemy, and promising them support from the southern troops. Of the

¹ Correspondence of John Laurens, p. 197.

² Custis, "Recollections," p. 413.

language which the heroic soldier used throughout this desperate day, an officer who was present, being asked if he had ever heard the commander swear, replied: "It was at Monmouth, and on a day that would have made any man swear. Yes, sir, he swore on that day, till the leaves shook on the trees, charming, delightful. Never have I enjoyed such swearing before, or since. Sir, on that ever-memorable day he swore like an angel from Heaven." This is the side of Washington's nature illustrated also by the anecdote, preserved by Chief Justice Marshall, who fought in the army, and suffered at Valley Forge, of the chief's throwing an inkstand at an officer guilty of cowardice. His love of courage was also shown after this battle of Monmouth. At one gun six men had fallen. As the last dropped, his wife, who was carrying water, seized the ramrod and carried on the work of an artilleryman. After the battle, Washington received her, gave her money, presented her with the commission of sergeant, which her husband had held, and recommended her for half pay for life. As Captain Molly she has become immortal.

Of the result of Washington's efforts to save the day, he himself wrote:—

"Before this will have reached you, the account of the battle of Monmouth will probably get to Virginia; which, from an unfortunate and bad beginning, turned out a glorious and happy day."

"In the morning we expected to renew the action; when, behold, the enemy had stole off as silent as the grave in the night, after having sent away their wounded. Getting a night's march of us, and having but ten miles to a strong post, it was judged inexpedient to follow them any further, but move towards the North River, lest they should have any design upon our posts there."

Washington had spent the night, wrapped in his cloak, upon the field of battle. Lafayette said of him: —

"General Washington was never greater in war than during this action. His presence stopped the retreat, his arrangements gave victory. His good appearance on horseback, his calm bravery, relieved by the animation produced by the misfortune of the morning, gave him the look best suited to excite enthusiasm."

The President of Congress wrote to him, "Love and respect for your Excellency is impressed on the heart of every grateful American."

Congress: —

"Resolved, unanimously, that the thanks of Congress be given to General Washington for the activity with which he marched from the camp at Valley Forge in pursuit of the enemy; for his distinguished exertions in forming the line of battle; and for his great good conduct in leading on the attack and gaining the important victory of Monmouth over the British grand army, under the command of General Sir Henry Clinton, in their march from Philadelphia to New York."

John Laurens wrote to his father: —

"The merit of restoring the day is due to the General; and his conduct was such throughout the

affair as has greatly increased my love and esteem for him."

Hamilton wrote :—

"I never saw the General to so much advantage. He instantly took measures for checking the enemy's advance, and giving time to the army, which was very near, to form and make a proper disposition. He then rode back and had the troops formed on a very advantageous piece of ground. . . . America owes a great deal to General Washington for this day's work. A general rout, dismay and disgrace would have attended the whole army in any other hands but his. By his own good sense and fortitude, he turned the fate of the day. Other officers have great merit in performing their parts well ; but he directed the whole with the skill of a master workman. He did not hug himself at a distance, and leave an Arnold to win laurels for him ; but by his own presence he brought order out of confusion, animated his troops, and led them to success."

This battle had the good results for which it was fought. It was the last definite encounter in which Washington was engaged for some time. Clinton, who had replaced Howe, went to New York. Washington followed, and encamped near White Plains. Lee was tried for disobedience to orders, misbehavior before the enemy, and disrespect to the commander-in-chief, and condemned. He left the army, and was naturally Washington's virulent enemy during the remaining four years of his life. Joseph Reed¹ wrote to General Greene

¹ See his "Life," Vol. 2, p. 38.

during the autumn, that Lee talked to him about Monmouth. Reed, after giving his reply, added:—

“I only added one piece of advice to him, to forbear any reflections on the Commander-in-chief, of whom, for the first time, I have heard slander on his private character, viz: great cruelty to his slaves in Virginia, and immorality of life, though they acknowledge it is so very secret that it is difficult to detect it. To me, who have had so good opportunity to know the purity of the latter, and equally believing the falsehood of the former, from the known excellence of his disposition, it appears so nearly bordering on a frenzy, that I can pity the wretches rather than despise them. However, they help to make up the party. New characters are emerging from security, like insects after a storm.”

This reference to charges of sexual immorality is one of a few in print, but there are many made every year in conversation, founded on the flimsiest evidence, and almost assuredly false.

One reason for the absence of action for a long time after Monmouth was reliance on French aid. A fleet, under the Count D’Estaing, arrived outside Sandy Hook in July, and on the 8th the Count wrote to the American general, “The talents and great actions of General Washington have insured him, in the eyes of all Europe, the title, truly sublime, of Deliverer of America.” It turned out to be impossible, on account of the shallowness of the water, for the

French admiral to enter the harbor and engage the British fleet. He therefore made an expedition against the enemy in Rhode Island, which was stopped by various causes, including a storm at sea. During this expedition disagreements began between the native and foreign officers, and Washington found Lafayette of assistance in removing discords. The young Frenchman was a diplomat, and did much good. Hamilton, proficient in French, adroit in personal relations, had won the confidence of the admiral, who wrote, on a certain matter, to Washington: "I entreat you not to confide the secret to any person, except Colonel Hamilton. His talents and his personal qualities have secured to him forever my esteem, my confidence, and my friendship." Washington's treatment of the French was courteous in the extreme. The French minister, M. Gerard, wrote to Vergennes:—

"I have had many conversations with General Washington, some of which have continued for three hours. It is impossible for me briefly to communicate the fund of intelligence, which I have derived from him, but I shall do it in my letters as occasions shall present themselves. I will now say only, that I have formed as high an opinion of the powers of his mind, his moderation, his patriotism, and his virtues, as I had before from common report conceived of his military talents and of the incalculable services he has rendered to his country."

In taking leave of him, M. Gerard called him "the greatest man and best citizen of America." A letter to Washington says:—

"All the French officers are extravagantly fond of your excellency; but the Admiral more so than any of the rest. They all speak of you with the highest reverence and respect. General Hancock made the Admiral a present of your picture. He was going to receive it on board by the firing a royal Salute. But General Hancock thought it might furnish a handle for some of the speculative politicians to remark the danger of characters becoming too important. He therefore dissuaded the Admiral from carrying the matter into execution."

Nevertheless, Washington did not put extravagant trust in French motives. About an expedition to Canada, contemplated by Congress, he expressed a fear that the introduction of a large body of French troops into a province, attached to them by all the ties of blood, habits, manners, and religion, would be "too great a temptation to be resisted by any power actuated by the common maxims of national policy." He offered this characteristic bit of philosophy:—

"Hatred to England may carry some into a excess of Confidence in France. . . . It is a maxim, founded on the universal experience of mankind, that no nation is to be trusted farther than it is bound by its interest; and no prudent statesman or politician will venture to depart from it."

Not even his love of Lafayette could throw him off his guard. "As the Marquis clothed his proposition, when he spoke it to me, it would seem to originate wholly with himself; but, it is far from impossible, that it had its birth in the Cabinet of France, and was put into this artful dress to give it the readier currency. I fancy that I read in the countenances of some people, on this occasion, more than the disinterested zeal of allies."

In one respect Lafayette refused to be ruled by his guide, philosopher, and friend. The French officers thought that Lord Carlisle, British commissioner to this country, under Lord North's bills, should be called to account for some terms uncomplimentary to France, and to Lafayette, highest among them in rank, fell the duty of challenging him. Estaing could not dissuade him, nor could Washington, although he showed insight into the British official's probable state of mind.

"The generous spirit of Chivalry, exploded by the rest of the world, finds a refuge, my dear friend, in the sensibility of your nation *only*. But it is in vain to cherish it, unless you can find antagonists to support it; and however well adapted it might have been to the times in which it existed, in our days it is to be feared, that your opponent, sheltering himself behind modern opinions, and under his present public character of Commissioner, would turn a virtue of such ancient date into ridicule."

Lord Carlisle did indeed quietly reply that for his public opinions, he was responsible only to his king and country.

Lafayette sailed, after an illness, for France in January. Their correspondence continued, and the easier and gentler side of Washington comes out, in nothing we have of him, more pleasantly than in this correspondence with his young French adorer: —

“Your forward zeal in the cause of liberty; your singular attachment to this infant world; your ardent and persevering efforts, not only in America, but since your return to France, to serve the United States; your polite attention to Americans, and your strict and uniform friendship for *me*, has ripened the first impressions of esteem and attachment, which I imbibed for you, into such perfect love and gratitude, that neither time nor absence can impair.”

Lafayette's desiré to induce his hero to visit him abroad when the war should end brought out this reply: —

“Let me entreat you to be persuaded, that to meet you anywhere, after the final accomplishment of so glorious an event, would contribute to my happiness; and that to visit a country, to whose generous aid we stand so much indebted, would be an additional pleasure; but remember, my good friend, that I am unacquainted with your language, that I am too far advanced in years to acquire a knowledge of it, and that, to converse through the medium of an interpreter upon common occasions, especially with the Ladies, must appear so extremely

awkward, insipid, and uncouth, that I can scarce bear it in idea."

With this sensitiveness may be compared this jocose but none the less true expression of how Washington felt about his own charms, as the years advanced:—

"Tell her (if you have not made a mistake and offered your own love instead of *hers*, to me) that I have a heart susceptible of the tenderest passion, and that it is already so strongly impressed with the most favorable ideas of her, that she must be cautious of putting love's torch to it, as you must be in fanning the flame. — But here again methinks I hear you say, I am not apprehensive of danger — My wife is young — you are growing old and the Atlantic is between you — All this is true, but know my good friend that no distance can keep anxious lovers long asunder, and that the wonders of the former ages may be revived in this — But alas! will you not remark that amidst all the wonders recorded in holy writ no instance can be produced where a young Woman from *real inclination* has preferred an old man — This is so much against me that I shall not be able I fear to contest the prize with you — yet, under the encouragement you have given me I shall enter the list for so inestimable a jewel."

Lafayette, of course, did much for America during his stay abroad, combating scepticism and stirring up enthusiasm.

Even more important than French help in paralyzing American effort during several years following 1777 was the poor supply of wisdom in

Congress, which, among its errors, included the dangerous one of profuse paper currency, which had such results that "not worth a Continental" is vigorous slang to-day. "Their principal dependence," wrote John Adams in 1777, "is not upon their arms, I believe, so much as upon the failure of our revenue. . . . We, however, must disappoint them by renouncing all luxuries, and by a severe economy. General Washington sets a fine example. He has banished wine from his table, and entertains his friends with rum and water." During the following winter a Tory organ sneered:—

"The account that we have had that the grand American Congress could make no more dollars for want of rags, proves altogether a mistake, for *independent* of the large supply expected from Washington's army as soon as they can be spared, we have reason to believe the country in general never abounded more in that article."

In October, 1778, Washington wrote to Gouverneur Morris:—

"Can *we* carry on the war much longer? Certainly no, less some measures can be devised & speedily executed to restore the credit of our currency, restrain extortion, & punish forestallers. Without these can be effected, what funds can stand the present expenses of the army? And what officer can bear the weight of prices, that every necessary article is now got to? A Rat in the shape of a horse is not to be bought at this time for less than £200; A Saddle under Thirty or

Forty; — Boots twenty, — and shoes and other articles in the like proportion. — How is it possible, therefore, for officers to stand this without an increase of pay? And how is it possible to advance their pay, when Flour is selling (at different places) from five to fifteen pounds pr cwt., — Hay from ten to thirty pounds pr Tunn, and Beef & other essentials in this proportion?"

This, of course, was in Continental currency, which at this time, in Massachusetts, was worth somewhat less than one-sixth as much as silver. To Benjamin Harrison, Washington wrote: —

"What may be the effect of such large and frequent emissions, of the dissensions, — parties, — extravagance, and a general lax of public virtue, Heaven alone can tell! I am afraid even to think of It."

And those who think our politics were superior then may ponder these further words of Washington: —

"If I was to be called upon to draw a picture of the times and of Men from what I have seen, and heard, and in part know, I should in one word say that idleness, dissipation & extravagance seems to have laid fast hold of most of them. — That speculation — peculation — and an insatiable thirst for riches seems to have got the better of every other consideration and almost of every order of men. — That party disputes and personal quarrels are the great business of the day whilst the momentous concerns of an empire — a great and accumulated debt — ruined finances — depreciated money — and want of credit (which in their consequences is the want of everything) are but secondary considerations and postponed from day to day — from week to week

as if our affairs wear the most promising aspect — after drawing this picture, which from my Soul I believe to be a true one, I need not repeat to you that I am alarmed and wish to see my Countrymen roused."

Of those who speculated in flour and other necessities, and by monopoly raised the price, Washington said: "I would to God, that one of the most atrocious in each State was hung in gibbets upon a gallows five times as high as the one prepared by Haman."

He accused them of wishing to continue the war for their own gain — a charge doubtless true, and how familiar to the America of to-day! This is the way he laid down his opinion of Congress: —

"It is a fact too notorious to be concealed that C—— is rent by Party — that much business of a trifling nature & personal concernment withdraw their attention from matters of great national moment. . . . When it is also known that idleness & dissipation take place of close attention and application, a man who wishes well to the liberties of his Country and desires to see its rights established cannot avoid crying out where are our men of abilities? Why do they not come forth to save their Country? let this voice my dear Sir call upon you — Jefferson & others — do not from a mistaken opinion that we are about to set down under our own fig tree, let our hitherto noble struggle end in ignom'y — believe me when I tell you there is danger of it."

His low opinion of Congress was shared by many men of the first reputation. John Jay,

then President of Congress, wrote to Washington April, 1779, that the marine committee was guided in its decisions by a commercial agent in Europe and his connections. "There is," he said, "as much intrigue in this State House as in the Vatican, but as little secrecy as in a boarding-school." General Greene wrote to the commander-in-chief, in April, 1779, "The politics of Congress are really alarming." And, about the same time, "It is said, days and weeks together are spent upon the most trifling disputes in the world; and those generally of a personal nature." Edmund Randolph, soon to play a larger part, wrote to Washington:—

"For, if report, and loud report too, is to be credited, that spirit of cabal and destructive ambition, which has elevated the faction-demagogue in every republic of antiquity, is making great head in the centre of these States; and, if not soon extinguished, will do more essential injury to the cause of America than the swords of Sir Harry and his whole army."

Much of the detail was too bad to be trusted to paper. "There has been," wrote Schuyler to Washington, "some wicked work regarding a certain appointment, which General Greene will advise you of verbally." Greene reported to the commander that all the public horses in Pennsylvania were starving, because the people refused to keep them. Thus the Congress and the peo-

ple appeared to those who loom largest in the times to which we are often referred for proofs of our own degeneracy.

So busy was Congress with its intrigues and private interests, that it did little to remedy the smallness and dissatisfaction of the army. "Mr. Washington's scaled miserables," as a Tory Journal called them, still lacked food and raiment to such an extent that there was some point to this effusion:—

"TO WASHINGTON

"Great Washington ! thou mighty son of Mars,
Thou thundering hero of the rebel wars,
Accept our thanks for all thy favors past,
Our special thanks await thee for the last.
Thy proclamation, timely to command
The cattle to be fattened round the land,
Bespeaks thy generosity, and shows
A charity that reaches to thy foes !
And was this order issued for our sakes,
To treat us with roast beef and savory steaks?
Or was it for thy rebel train intended,
Give 'em the hides — and let their shoes be mended?
Tho' shoes are what they seldom wear of late,
'Twould load their nimble feet too much with weight !
And as for the beef — there needs no puff about it ;
In short, they must content themselves without it,
Not that we mean to have them starved — why, marry,
The live stock in abundance, which they carry
Upon their backs, prevents all fear of that !"

Another description comes from Jonathan Odell, the popular loyalist rhymmer:—

“Strike up, hell’s music ! roar, infernal drums !
Discharge the cannon ! Lo, the warrior comes !
He comes, not tame as on Ohio’s banks,
But rampant at the head of ragged ranks.
Hunger and itch are with him — Gates and Wayne !
And all the lice of Egypt in his train.
Sure these are Falstaff’s soldiers, poor and bare,
Or else the rotten reg’ments of Rag-Fair. . . .

“Wilt thou, great chief of Freedom’s lawless sons,
Great captain of the western Goths and Huns,
Wilt thou for once permit a private man
To parley with thee, and thy conduct scan?
At Reason’s bar has Catiline been heard :
At Reason’s bar e’en Cromwell has appeared. . . .

“Hear thy indictment, Washington, at large ;
Attend and listen to the solemn charge :
Thou hast supported an atrocious cause
Against the king, thy country, and the laws ;
Committed perjury, encouraged lies,
Forced conscience, broken the most sacred ties ;
Myriads of wives and fathers at thy hand
Their slaughtered husbands, slaughtered sons, demand ;
That pastures hear no more the lowing kine,
That towns are desolate, all — all is thine ;
The frequent sacrilege that pained my sight,
The blasphemies my pen abhors to write,
Innumerable crimes on thee must fall —
For thou maintainest, thou defendest all. . . .

“What could, when half way up the hill to fame,
Induce thee to go back, and link with shame?
Was it ambition, vanity or spite
That prompted thee with Congress to unite ;
Or did all three within thy bosom roll,
‘Thou heart of hero with a traitor’s soul’?”

Thus the woes of the army and Washington's crimes were in the Tory mind all mixed together. Their rhymesters could hardly overstate the case. Among other troubles caused by the worthlessness of the currency, desertions naturally were increased, and mutinies resulted. The first one of importance was in Pennsylvania, where a large part of the troops were foreigners, and several years later the most serious one of all was in the same state. Washington's opposite methods of handling two of these outbreaks, which happened near together, showed the nature of his mind, which sought always a practical object. In the first case he used tact, and endeavored to have certain abuses redressed and the mutineers pacified, advising General Wayne to take "such measures founded in Justice, and a proper degree of generosity as will have a tendency to conciliate or divide the men." Clothing was furnished, discharges granted to some, certificates given for depreciation in their pay, and the mutiny ended. On the other hand, however, when the Jersey troops revolted, immediately after, Washington ordered prompt and severe action, and spoke of their unreasonableness "in revolting at a time when the State was exerting itself to redress all their real grievances." In reality, however, the difference in the two cases was less in the justice of the demands than in the ability to deal with

the culprits. "You will have heard," Washington wrote to Steuben, "of the defection of the Pennsylvania line, and the disagreeable compromise made with them. . . . Fortunately a part of the Jersey line since followed their example, and gave us an opportunity, after compelling all the mutineers to an unconditional surrender, to make examples of two of the most active leaders." That word "fortunately" is one of the most charming, in its context, ever used by Washington.

In the first case magnanimity was forced upon him. The second, which found him in a position to cope with it, he looked upon as a godsend.

On the general subject of punishment, Washington, anticipating Mr. W. S. Gilbert, wrote to Congress in favor of "a due proportion between the crime and the penalty." He wished an extension of corporal punishment, and added: "A variety in punishment is of utility, as well as a proportion." In recommending martial law to the governor of Pennsylvania he gave a comprehensive bit of political philosophy, "In general I esteem it a good maxim, that the best way to preserve the confidence of the people durably is to promote their true interest. . . .

"Extensive powers not exercised as far as was necessary have, I believe, scarcely ever failed to ruin the possessor."

The officers, during this dragging latter part

of the war, were as displeased as the men. Washington urged Congress "to make the Officers *take pleasure* in their situation: If they are only made to *endure* it, the Army will be an insipid, spiritless Mass, incapable of acting with Vigor and ready to tumble to pieces at every reverse of Fortune." After a long struggle against democratic prejudices, Washington succeeded in securing half pay for life for those officers who should continue in the service to the end of the war. He always had considerable sympathy with the point of view of officers, although he sometimes combated their ideas because he was alive to civil considerations.

The long period of inactivity was not specially favorable, in a nature like Washington's, to increased serenity, and signs of irritability were frequent. He complained of the great lenity to prisoners, and the British lack of gratitude, in terms just as strong as those in which Lord George Germaine made the converse charges in writing, about the same time, to General Clinton. These things, however, although the habit of irascibility grew on him, were really superficial, and his feeling toward life was much more deeply expressed in these words to a member of Congress:—

"My mind is fortified against, or rather prepared for, the most distressing accts. that can be given of them.

. . . But we must not despair ; the game is yet in our own hands ; to play it well is all we have to do, and I trust the experience of error will enable us to act better in future."

In 1780 Greene wrote to Reed, "The great man is confounded at his situation, but appears to be reserved and silent." Pickering stated a common experience when he wrote that he had been with the army three months, and in that time had not found it possible to accost the general with ease, although he could converse without difficulty with any other general officer. He lived his troubles through alone. Every morning when he awoke, he ruminated, as he expressed it, on the business of the ensuing day. Masses of detail were on his shoulders, as well as the largest questions, military and civil. Deafness, that most irritating of infirmities, was growing. There was nothing stimulating to do—only to wait, hope, encourage the soldiers, and reason with Congress. Is it wonderful that in little things, and for the moment, his nerves occasionally found expression? In big things, and permanently, he was serene, standing like a beacon in the midst of sloth and corruption. He deserves the name he has, of the best among the great—but what of the nation? Many noble deeds were done; but since soldiers deserted, officers resigned, citizens hung back, and Congress erred and peculated, is it not time for

American moralists to cease assuring us that we have degenerated? In one way only does the American Revolution show a superiority to our own day. Washington, Franklin, Hamilton, Jefferson, Jay, and Adams are not to be matched by any group of men who have acted together since. Those leaders were brought to the front by a struggle to the death for a great cause,—the sword drawn for constitutional rights. In such another crisis fortune might bring such a mass of talent to the front. Without the occasion it could never appear. On the whole, we may be sure that the general moral conditions which Washington faced, when his country was in its birth, were decidedly not superior to those in which we live to-day.

The Commander was always conscientious in his relations to the inhabitants of the places where he quartered. When he made his headquarters, in the winter of 1779-1780, in the Ford house, near Morristown, he made an inventory of all articles appropriated to his use during the winter. When he withdrew in the spring he asked Mrs. Ford if everything had been returned. "All but one silver table-spoon," said she. He made a note of it, and soon after the lady received a spoon bearing the initials G. W.¹ When alarms were

¹ Her son, Judge Ford, told these details to Lossing and Custis. "Field Book of the Revolution," Vol. 1, p. 314; Custis, "Recollections," p. 139.

given, he went to Mrs. Ford's room, drew the curtains, and comforted her with assurances of safety. Sometimes soldiers were needed at the windows, and then Mrs. Ford and Mrs. Washington would have to lie in bed with the winter air from the windows piercing their modestly drawn curtains. Mrs. Washington's trips to headquarters were paid for by the government, on Washington's suggestion, for, as he was unable to go to her, he thought her visits a legitimate item of his expenses. Other generals had their wives also, and General Greene wrote in March, 1779, from Middlebrook: "His Excellency and Mrs. Greene danced upwards of three hours without once sitting down. Upon the whole, we had a pretty little frisk." Of one of the sights which the ladies witnessed, Mrs. Washington wrote to her daughter-in-law:¹—

"Yesterday I saw the funniest, and at the same time most ridiculous review of the troops I ever heard of. Nearly all the troops were drawn up in order, and Mrs. Knox, Mrs. Greene, and myself saw the whole performance from a carriage. The General and Billy, followed by a lot of mounted savages, rode along the line. Some of the Indians were fairly fine-looking, but most of them appeared worse than Falstaff's gang. And such horses and trappings! The General says it was done to keep the Indians friendly towards us."

Thatcher left an account of the same review, May 14th, 1779:—

¹ "Mary and Martha Washington," 185.

“His Excellency, with his usual dignity, followed by his mulatto servant Bill, riding a beautiful grey steed, passed in front of the line and received the salute. He was accompanied by a singular group of savages. . . . They exhibited a novel and truly disgusting spectacle. But his Excellency deems it good policy to pay some attention to this tribe of the wilderness, and to convince them of the strength and discipline of our army, that they may be encouraged if disposed to be friendly, or deterred from aggression, if they should become hostile to our country.”

To Lafayette Washington reported, with unconscious humor, that the Indians “have been instigated to arms and acts of Barbarism by a nation, which is unable to protect them, and of consequence had left them to that correction, which is due to their villany.” To Rochambeau he wrote, doubtless equally guiltless of comic intent: “The visit you have had from the Indians gives me great pleasure. I felicitate you on that, which you must have had in the company of such agreeable and respectable guests.” An entertaining idea that came into his head was this: “How far, my good sir, would it be practicable if the Indians should be disposed to more than a neutrality, either by themselves, or with the aid of a few men in disguise, to seize the Fortress of Niagara? A proof like this, of returning friendship, would be interesting and masterly.”

Although Washington took part in no fighting for a long time after Monmouth, he, of course, as commander-in-chief, had much to do in the direction of other men. His was the plan to capture Stony Point and Paulus Hook, two fortresses on the Hudson, occupied by the enemy. Tradition asserts that when Washington proposed to General Wayne the storming of Stony Point, "Mad Anthony" replied, "General, I'll storm hell, if you will only plan it." Washington suggested to Wayne, "The usual time for exploits of this kind is a little before day, for which reason a vigilant officer is then more on the watch. I therefore recommend a midnight hour."

On the morning of July 16th, 1779, Washington received the following note:—

"STONY POINT, two o'clock A.M.

"16 July, 1779.

"DEAR GENERAL: The fort and garrison, with Colonel Johnson, are ours. Our officers and men behaved like men who are determined to be free.

"Yours, most sincerely,

"ANTHONY WAYNE."

Congress, besides giving medals to Wayne and to two other officers, passed a vote of thanks to Washington "for the vigilance, wisdom, and magnanimity with which he had conducted the military operations of the States," especially as manifested in the orders for the late attack.

The attempt on Paulus Hook under Major Henry Lee, who originated it, began successfully, but ended in cowardice. Clinton reported of the Americans that "their retreat was as disgraceful as their attack had been spirited and well-conducted," and Lee, in a private letter, said: "In my report to General Washington, I passed the usual general compliments to the troops under my command. I did not tell the world that near one-half of my countrymen left me."

CHAPTER XIII

ARNOLD'S TREACHERY AND HAMILTON'S PIQUE

"When in the autumn of 1780 the army was preparing to hut in the wood back of Newburgh, the General being a little advanced of me (in going over the ground selected for the hutment), a countryman fell along side, and looking forward to the General, said to me, 'Now, I suppose he is the greatest man in the world!'"—
PICKERING.

WASHINGTON was constantly in favor of vigor in war, whatever the chances of peace. "We may rely upon it that we shall never have Peace till the enemy are convinced that we are in a condition to carry on the war. It is no new maxim in politics that for a nation to obtain Peace, or insure it, it must be prepared for war." Everything was bent, in his mind, toward increasing the efficiency of the army, and an illustration of this may be seen in his discrimination about exchanges. He favored exchange of officers, but not of privates, since the American privates were enlisted for a short time and he frankly put political above what he called "humane" motives. He recommended strong measures, military and civil, and he had little sympathy with the party which

distrusted "army principles"—a party which remained alive, with Mifflin and Gates still active, but which was much weaker than it had been a few years earlier. One absurd report in a Tory newspaper was, that Congress had asked France to invite Washington to Versailles, as a polite mode of escaping his control. Legislative debates still included fears that too much power was in the hands of one man. How worthy those hands were to hold any amount of authority was about to be shown again, in a singularly conclusive way, by the manner in which he met two particularly distressing misfortunes. One of the men whom he most admired betrayed his country; another peevishly quarrelled with its general. Nothing in Washington's history shows his moral greatness more vividly than the calm, right, decided and magnanimous acts with which he met these exhibitions of ingratitude.

One of them is as dramatic an episode as our history contains. Throughout the war, influenced by the bravery and ability of General Arnold, Washington sided with him against the hostility of Congress, which refused him well-earned promotion, partly from factional motives, partly from a dislike of his cupidity. Adams had written to his wife in 1777: "I spent last evening in the war office with General Arnold. He has been basely slandered and libelled. The regulars say,

'he fought like Julius Cæsar.' I am wearied to death with the wrangles between military officers, high and low. They quarrel like cats and dogs. They worry one another like mastiffs, scrambling for rank and pay, like apes for nuts." When Congress voted that Arnold should be reprimanded for the use which he made of private property in Philadelphia, Washington worded the reprimand so that it sounded almost like a compliment. One of Arnold's letters to Washington said: "As Congress have stamped ingratitude as a current coin, I must take it, I wish your Excellency, for long and eminent services, may not be paid in the same coin." When Arnold sought the command of the powerful fortress at West Point, Washington, not for a moment suspecting improper motives, gave it to him.

On the day on which Arnold was to scatter his garrison about the highlands so that troops could be carried up the river by British ships and take possession of the fort, he received a letter informing him that the officer with whom he had arranged the surrender, Major André, had been captured and the plot revealed. He went to his wife's room and told her that some transactions had come to light which had forever banished him from his country. She fell in a swoon. Arnold left her so. After she recovered, she drew

the servants by her cries. "She remained frantic all day," says Hamilton, "accusing every one who approached her with an intention to murder her child (an infant in her arms), and exhibiting every sign of the most genuine and agonizing distress. Exhausted by the fatigue and tumult of her spirits, the phrenzy subsided towards evening, and she sank into all the sadness of affliction."

An hour later Washington, who was temporarily in the vicinity on business, reached the house, which was on the side of the river opposite to West Point. He was informed that Mrs. Arnold was ill, and that her husband had gone to West Point to prepare to receive him. He and his party, except Hamilton, started for the fort, leaving word that he would return for dinner.

As they were crossing the Hudson, Washington, looking about him, said, "Gentlemen, I am glad General Arnold has gone before us, for we shall now have a salute, and the roaring of the cannon will have a fine effect among these mountains."¹

There was no salute, however. As their boat approached the western shore, an officer was seen coming down the rocky shore. He apologized for not receiving the commander-in-chief with appropriate ceremony.

¹ Arnold's "Life of Arnold."

"Is not General Arnold here?" inquired Washington.

"No, sir; he has not been here for two days, nor have I heard from him in that time."

Washington remained during the morning and inspected the fortifications. On his way back he received the news, and took the blow in perfect quiet. He sent Hamilton off to make every endeavor to capture Arnold, then called Lafayette and Knox, put the report into the Frenchman's hands, and said calmly: "Arnold is a traitor, and has fled to the British. Whom can we trust now?"

Hamilton's pursuit was futile. He returned with a most shameless letter to Washington, from Arnold, sent ashore under a flag from the British ship on which the traitor had taken refuge. The general took precaution against an attack of the enemy, but he showed no excitement and no anxiety. When dinner at the Robinson house was announced, he said, "Come, gentlemen, since Mrs. Arnold is ill, and the General is absent, let us sit down without ceremony."

After dinner he went to Mrs. Arnold's room, delivered her letter, and said that he had, in accordance with his duty, done all in his power to have her husband arrested, but not having succeeded, it gave him pleasure to assure her of his safety.

She upbraided him with being in a plot to murder her child. "One moment she raved," wrote Hamilton to his future wife, "another she melted into tears. Sometimes she pressed her infant to her bosom, and lamented its fate, occasioned by the imprudence of its father, in a manner that would have pierced insensibility itself."

Washington wrote to Rochambeau, in command of the French army in America: "Traitors are the growth of every country, and in a revolution of the present nature, it is more to be wondered at, that the catalogue is so small, than that there have been found a few." To his friend, John Laurens, he wrote: —

"In no instance since the commencement of the war has the interposition of Providence appeared more remarkably conspicuous than in the rescue of the post and garrison of West point from Arnold's villanous perfidy. How far he meant to involve me in the catastrophe of this place, does not appear by any indubitable evidence; and I am rather inclined to think he did not wish to hazard the more important object of his treachery, by attempting to combine two events, the lesser of which might have marr'd the greater. André has met his fate, and with that fortitude, which was to be expected from an accomplished man and gallant officer; but I am mistaken if, at *this* time, 'Arnold is undergoing the torment of a mental hell.' He wants feeling. From some traits of his character which have lately come to my knowledge, he seems to have been so hack-

neyed in villany, and so lost to all sense of honor and shame, that, while his faculties will enable him to continue his sordid pursuits, there will be no time for remorse."

Washington was extremely anxious to capture Arnold because he believed it would do the country good to see him tried and executed. A plan was worked up between him and Major Lee, by which a sergeant was to seem to desert, join the British, and, with the help of American spies in their ranks, carry off Arnold alive. Washington wrote of this plan:—

"No circumstance whatever shall obtain my consent to his being put to death. The idea which would accompany such an event would be that Ruffians had been hired to assassinate him. My aim is to make a public example of him, — and this should be strongly impressed upon those who are employed to bring him off. The sergeant must be very circumspect—too much zeal may create suspicion — and too much precipitancy may defeat the project. The most inviolable secrecy must be observed on all hands. I send you five guineas; but I am not satisfied of the sergeant's appearing with much specie — this circumstance may also lead to suspicion as it is but too well known to the enemy that we do not deal much in this article. The Interviews between the party in and out of the city should be managed with much caution and seeming indifference, or else the frequency of their meetings, &c., may betray the design and involve bad consequences."

The plan was pursued with great daring by the sergeant, who was successful almost to the end.

On the very day preceding the night when Arnold was to be seized, gagged, and carried off by him and his confederates, he was transferred, not on account of any suspicion, to a British ship, and the scheme collapsed.

Washington has been a good deal blamed for his refusal to allow the captured Major André any mitigation of the fate of a spy, because he happened to be an attractive and well-born man. Hamilton, who had begun to cool toward Washington, wrote to his future wife:—

“I send you my account of Arnold’s affair; and to justify myself to your sentiments, I must inform you that I urged a compliance with Andre’s request to be shot; and I do not think it would have had an ill-effect, but some people are only sensible to motives of policy, and sometimes, from a narrow disposition, mistake it.

“When Andre’s tale comes to be told, and present resentment is over, the refusing him the privilege of choosing the manner of his death will be branded with too much obstinacy.”

Anne Seward, the British poetess, had stood out against her friend Dr. Johnson in favor of the colonists, but this act of severity led her to exclaim:—

“O Washington ! I thought thee great and good,
Nor knew thy Nero taste for guiltless blood,
Severe to use the power that fortune gave,
Thou cool determined murderer of the brave.”

As far as the evidence was concerned, there was no reasonable doubt, in spite of all the talk about his visit within the American lines being at the invitation of Arnold, who was still in command. As General Greene, who was in the court, put it, "We prefer to believe André himself." His own statements rendered him liable to hanging on established military principles. Greene logically insisted also, that if André's case could be discriminated from that of a spy, his punishment should be not lessened but entirely remitted. Charles Lamb, rather smiling at the sentiment which gave the unfortunate officer a place in Westminster Abbey, spoke of him as "the amiable spy, Major André." Of course, it is easy to feel sympathy with him, but so it is with any honest spy, for "the authorized maxims and practices of war are the satires of human nature." A sample of the way André was lugged into every question may be seen in this, from *Rivington's Gazette*, July 11th, 1781:—

"George! George! the paralytic state of your cause is too manifest to deceive a people who have bought wisdom at the expense of their *fortunes* and *blood*. They remember the *flagitious fib* uttered in general orders to your whole army on the 20th of August, 1776: . . .

"Deny this letter if you dare, murderer of Andre! murderer of those Americans who sought liberty, but have lost their lives in your baneful projects and services, by trusting to the never to be forgotten false and bloody orders of 1776."

Romilly, afterward the great English jurist, wrote:—

“What do you think of Arnold’s conduct? You may well suppose he does not want advocates here. I cannot join with them. The arguments used by Clinton and Arnold, in their letters to Washington, to prove that Andre could not be considered a spy, are: First, that he had with him, when he was taken, a protection of Arnold’s, who was at that time acting under a commission of Congress, and therefore competent to give protection. Certainly he was, to all strangers to his negotiations with Clinton, but not to Andre, who knew him to be at that time a traitor to the Congress; nay more, whose protection was granted for no other purpose but to promote and give effect to his treachery. In the second place, they say that at the time he was taken he was upon neutral ground; but then they do not deny that he had been within the American lines in disguise.”

Soon after this blow, Washington lost, for a time, the friendship of Hamilton. The young soldier was frankly ambitious and persistent, and Washington, although he felt his value, was compelled, in order to avoid favoritism, to refuse him some military favors which he sought. Some Tory references to Hamilton contained amusing references to his place in the Washington family. Smyth’s Journal gave a report “that Mrs. Washington had a mottled-tom-cat (which she calls, in a complimentary way, Hamilton) with thirteen yellow rings around his tail, and

that his flaunting it suggested to the Congress the adoption of the same number of stripes for the rebel flag."

The same Journal remarked:—

"It is said little Hamilton, the poet and composer to the Lord Protector Mr. Washington, is engaged upon a literary work which is intended to give posterity a true estimate of the present rebellion and its supporters, in case Clinton's light bobs should extirpate the whole race of rebels this campaign.

"As the facile penman has seen a great deal of life in a very few years, and is withal a '*tarnation cute obsarver*,' it is probable he will afford posterity great amusement as well as instruction. It is said that the best *American* artists are engaged to illustrate the work, which is to be much enhanced in value by the presence of a vignette, representing a combat between a Presbyterian deacon, and the flesh and the devil (in which the deacon gets whipped).

"The great interest Mr. Washington has in the work will be imagined, when we consider that he wore out four pair of sherry vallies (leather breeches) a few weeks ago, sitting for his picture to a peddling limner in Philadelphia, especially to illuminate the writer's ideas."

The quarrel, which for a time made a coolness between the two, is sufficiently creditable to the greater and less brilliant man when told in Hamilton's own words, written to Schuyler, February 18th, 1781:—

"I am no longer a member of the General's family. This information will surprise you. Two days ago, the

General and I passed each other on the stairs. He told me he wanted to speak to me. I answered that I would wait upon him immediately. I went below, and delivered Mr. Tilghman a letter to be sent to the Commissary, containing an order of a pressing and interesting nature.

"Returning to the General, I was stopped on the way by the Marquis de Lafayette, and we conversed together about a minute on a matter of business. He can testify how impatient I was to get back, and that I left him in a manner which, but for our intimacy, would have been more than abrupt. Instead of finding the General, as is usual, in his room, I met him at the head of the stairs, where, accosting me in an angry tone, 'Colonel Hamilton,' said he, 'you have kept me waiting at the head of the stairs these ten minutes. I must tell you, sir, you treat me with disrespect.' I replied, without petulency, but with decision, 'I am not conscious of it, Sir; but since you have thought it necessary to tell me so, we part.' 'Very well, sir,' said he, 'if it be your choice,' or something to that effect, and we separated."

Less than an hour later Tilghman came to Hamilton, in the general's name, assuring him of his chief's great confidence in Hamilton's abilities, integrity, and usefulness, and of his desire to have a candid conversation to heal a difference which could have happened only in a moment of passion. Hamilton replied that he preferred to decline the conversation, and to act as if nothing had happened, until his place could be supplied. Washington consented to omit the talk, and

thanked the restive young prodigy for his offer to remain.

Hamilton recorded the fact that he always disliked the position of aide-de-camp.

“Infected, however, with the enthusiasm of the times, an idea of the General’s character, which experience taught me to be unfounded, overcame my scruples, and induced me to *accept his invitation* and enter into his family. It was not long before I discovered he was neither remarkable for delicacy nor good temper, which revived my former aversion to the station in which I was acting, and it has been increasing ever since.”

Of his attitude after the breach he said: —

“I was convinced the cessions the General might make would be dictated by his interest, and that his self-love would never forgive me what it would regard as a humiliation.

“I believe you know the place I hold in the General’s confidence and counsels, which will make it the more extraordinary to you to learn that for three years past I have felt no friendship for him and have professed none. The truth is our dispositions are the opposites of each other, and the pride of my temper would not suffer me to profess what I did not feel. Indeed, when advances of this kind have been made to me on his part, they were received in a manner that showed at least that I had no desire to court them, and that I desired to stand rather upon a footing of military confidence than of private attachment.

“You are too good a judge of human nature not to be sensible how this conduct in me must have operated

on a man to whom all the world is offering incense. With this key you will easily unlock the present mystery."

He wrote that it had often been difficult for him not to renounce his office of aide, and that he was always determined that, if ever there was a breach, he would not consent to an accommodation.

"The General is a very honest man. His competitors have slender abilities and less integrity. His popularity has often been essential to the safety of America, and is still of great importance to it. These considerations have influenced my past conduct respecting him, and will influence my future. I think it is necessary he should be supported."

At the time when Hamilton was chafing in a position where respect and obedience were required, Washington, whose opinion was asked about the young officer's suitability to an office in which he later so profoundly influenced the fortunes of his nation, replied:—

"How far Colo. Hamilton, of whom you ask my opinion as a financier, has turned his thoughts to that particular study, I am unable to ansr., because I never entered upon a discussion of this point with him. But this I can venture to advance, from a thorough knowledge of him, that there are few men to be found, of his age, who have a more general knowledge than he possesses; and none whose soul is more firmly engaged in the cause, or who exceeds him in probity and sterling virtue."

Writing to Lafayette, to whom Hamilton confided the quarrel, Washington said : —

“ The event, which you seem to speak of with regret, my friendship for you would most assuredly have induced me to impart to you in the moment it happened, had it not been for the request of H——, who desired that no mention might be made of it. Why this injunction on me, while he was communicating it himself, is a little extraordinary. But I complied, and religiously fulfilled it.”

Soon after leaving the military family of the commander-in-chief, Hamilton applied for employment in a light corps, and Washington, refusing in order to avoid jealousy, added, “ My principal concern arises from an apprehension, that you will impute my refusal of your request to other motives, than those I have expressed.”

Nothing in Washington's character is finer than the inevitableness with which he subordinated his feelings. An oversensitive man, he acted as if public and private wrongs to him were alike indifferent. He never for a moment hesitated to use every trick to capture Arnold, and he calmly followed his convictions about André in a storm of abuse. He found insubordination and impertinence in a friend to whom he had shown every favor, and he rose above the smaller pride and made advances toward a reconciliation. He

refused even then to be led into favoritism, but he lived to win Hamilton back and make him of unfathomable use to his country.

Much more constant was the personal sympathy between Washington and Lafayette, who returned to America in the spring of 1780. He wrote to his wife in the autumn:—

“Gen. Washington felt very much what I said to him for you. He charges me to give you his most tender sentiments. He has many of them for George. He was much touched by the name which we gave him. We talk often of you and of the little family.”

The Marquis was always vigilant, and he appears well in the frank words which he wrote to his chief about the matters which led to the famous reprimand of Lund Washington. He wrote on April 23d, 1781:—

“Great happiness is derived from friendship; and I do particularly experience it in the attachment which unites me to you. But friendship has its duties, and the man that likes you the best will be the forwardest in letting you know everything where you can be concerned.

“When the enemy came to your house, many negroes deserted to them. This piece of news did not affect me much, as I little value those concerns. But you cannot conceive how unhappy I have been, to hear that Mr. Lund Washington went on board the enemy’s vessels, and consented to give them provisions. This being done by the gentleman who, in some measure, represents you at your house, will certainly have a bad effect, and con-

trasts with spirited answers from some neighbors, that had their houses burnt accordingly."

Lund Washington had already reported, however, and the general replied : —

"DEAR LUND: Your letter of the 18th. came to me by the last Post. I am very sorry to hear of your loss. I am a little sorry to hear of my own; but that which gives me most concern is, that you should go on board the enemy's vessels, and furnish them with refreshments. It would have been a less painful circumstance to me to have heard, that in consequence of your non-compliance with their request, they had burnt my House and laid the Plantation in ruins. You ought to have considered yourself as my representative, and should have reflected on the bad example of communicating with the enemy, and making a voluntary offer of refreshments to them with a view to prevent a conflagration."

In such incidents as this Washington excites an approval almost warming to love. He lacked charm, that vague and magic something which so often wins against merit; but when the big shock came, or the final question, he rose above every mist, and we do homage to the grandeur of what is higher than all amenities, — the force of righteousness and truth. Undoubtedly there was a certain dryness in his character, an absence of poetry, that leads many intelligent students to feel, even if they do not name, an approach to philistinism, perhaps to smugness, in his nature.

Such qualities are more often felt in his written words than in his deeds or general thoughts, and nothing is more absurd than the praise which is sometimes given to his style. The style was never less adequately the man. Frequently the ready-made phrases in which good counsel is delivered are so conventional that they sound like cant, even where the conviction behind them is undoubted and the understanding broad. Nothing that he ever said, in his own words, gains through its form, and much noble perception is mangled in its expression, although no reported statement of his is as distressing as some of the most famous sayings of Admiral Nelson. In Franklin's phrases lurk always a raciness, a humor, and an instinct for language that make them literature; Jefferson's fame is inseparable from his gifts for expression, and Hamilton's words, spoken and written, were the weapons of an intellectual warrior. Lowell, to be sure, has praised the stately full dress of Washington's writing, but we may assume that the distinguished critic was unconsciously paying a tribute to one of the chief's brilliant secretaries. Surely, nobody could travel through the long collections of Sparks or Ford with unmitigated joy. There are big things about, mountains of competence and accomplishment, but not a green and fascinating surface. Intimacy, with what is left to us of

Washington gives us affection as well as admiration, but an affection austere, respectful, and remote, not warm and comfortable, — even such an affection as was felt by many of the friends who saw him face to face and went with him through war and peace.

CHAPTER XIV

VICTORY

"Which was the most splendid spectacle ever witnessed: the opening feast of Prince George in London, or the resignation of Washington? Which is the noble character for after ages to admire: yon fribble dancing in lace and spangles, or yonder hero who sheathes his sword after a life of spotless honor, a purity unreproached, a courage indomitable, and a consummate victory? Which of those is the true gentleman? What is it to be a gentleman? Is it to have lofty aims, to lead a pure life, to keep your honor virgin; to have the esteem of your fellow-citizens, and the love of your fire-side; to bear good fortune meekly; to suffer evil with constancy; and through evil or good to maintain truth always?"—THACKERAY.

A CHANGE was made in the military situation by Lafayette's arrival with news of further French reënforcements. They were under the command of the Count de Rochambeau, who has been praised by some writers, but generally accused of mediocrity. Mirabeau called him "altogether incapable." Of Washington's plans, Rochambeau wrote in his Memoirs:—

"I ought to say, nevertheless, in justification of Lafayette, that he expressed substantially the sentiments of General Washington. That commander feared, and not without foundation, considering the absolute discredit of the finances of Congress, that the struggles of

this campaign would be the last efforts of expiring patriotism. He wished, at any hazard, to risk an attack upon the enemy in their strong-hold, while he had the French troops at his disposal. But he perceived the consequences, and adopted the principles of my letter; and, during a long correspondence between us, I could never too highly praise the solidity of his judgment and the amenity of his style."

The British under Clinton captured Charleston early in May, 1780, by brilliant military action. Clinton, hearing of the French reënforcements, came back to New York, and left Cornwallis to take care of the South, which for a time he did rather successfully, beating General Gates at Camden in August, but losing support from the inhabitants through the severity of his own measures and the cruelty of his cavalry leader, Colonel Tarleton. Greene, who was sent south after Gates's defeat, spoke, the next spring, of the majority of the people favoring the enemy; but Cornwallis received little assistance from them. He reported, after he had beaten Greene at Guilford in March, that the inhabitants came in, shook hands, said they were glad, and then rode away again. "We fight, get beat, and fight again," wrote Greene to Washington. Cornwallis turned his attention to Virginia, which Arnold had already overrun "with his fifteen hundred or two thousand plunderers," as they were called by R. H. Lee, who added, "The learned and the judicious

Polybius was of opinion, that the principal inducing motive of Alexander the Great for invading Persia, was the little resistance that the ten thousand Grecians met with in passing through that great empire." Lafayette was sent to Virginia, Arnold was called back to the North, and Cornwallis went after Lafayette, writing "the boy cannot escape me." Lafayette reported to Washington that the militia feared the British cavalry as they would so many wild beasts, and spoke of himself as "not strong enough even to get beaten." His behavior in keeping his troops cheered and sharing their hardships is very highly praised in the Memoirs of "Light-Horse Harry" Lee who served under him.

Meantime, while Washington, in the highlands of the Hudson, was watching Clinton, neither knew the intentions of the other. Washington was already thinking of starting south after Cornwallis, but the British idea of his plans is shown in these stanzas written by Stansbury for a reunion dinner given in New York City in 1781:—

" Friends, push round the bottle, and let us be drinking,
While Washington up in his mountains is slinking ;
Good faith, if he's wise he'll not leave them behind him,
For he knows he's safe nowheres where Britons can find him.
When he and Fayette talk of taking this city,
Their vaunting moves only our mirth and our pity.

" But, though near our lines they're too cautious to tarry,
What courage they shew when a hen-roost they harry !

Who can wonder that poultry and oxen and swine
Seek shelter in York from such valor divine, —
While Washington's jaws and the Frenchman's are aching
The spoil they have lost, to be boiling and baking."

Nor did the Americans know the enemy's intentions in the South. "A correspondent of mine," wrote Lafayette to Washington, "a servant to Lord Cornwallis, . . . says his master, Tarleton, and Simcoe are still in town, but expect to move. . . . His Lordship is so shy of his papers, that my honest friend says he cannot get at them."

In August the French and American armies, taking measures to deceive the enemy by suggesting an attack on Staten Island, started for the South. His plans and fears at this time were later clearly stated by Washington himself:

"It never was in contemplation to attack New York, unless the garrison should first have been so far disgarnished to carry on the southern operations, as to render our success in the siege of that place as infallible as any future military event can ever be made. For, I repeat it, and dwell upon it again and again, some splendid advantage (whether upon a larger or smaller scale was almost immaterial) was so essentially necessary to revive the expiring hopes and languid exertions of the country, at the crisis in question, that I never would have consented to embark in any enterprise, wherein, from the most rational plan and accurate calculations, the favorable issue should not have appeared as clear to my view as a ray of light. The failure

of an attempt against the posts of the enemy could in no other possible situation during the war have been so fatal to our cause.

“That much trouble was taken and finesse used to misguide and bewilder Sir Henry Clinton in regard to the real object, by fictitious communications as well as by making a deceptive provision of ovens, forage, and boats in his neighborhood, is certain. Nor were less pains taken to deceive our own army; for I had always conceived, when the imposition did not completely take place at home, it could never sufficiently succeed abroad.”

Gouverneur Morris, who was in Philadelphia when Washington passed through on his way to the South, has left a glimpse of the incidents of the day in his Diary for August 30th:—

“Went out to meet his Excellency General Washington, who arrived in this city about one o’clock, amidst the universal acclamations of the citizens, who displayed every mark of joy on the occasion. His Excellency alighted at the City Tavern, received the compliments of many gentlemen, who went out to escort him, and of others who came there to pay him their respects, and then adjourned to my house with his suit, Count de Rochambeau, the Chevalier Chastellux, General Knox, General Moultrie, and others, to dinner. The owners of several ships in the harbor ordered them out into the stream, and fired salutes, whilst we drank; the United States, His Most Christian Majesty, His Catholic Majesty, the United Provinces, the Allied Armies, Count de Grasse’s speedy arrival, &c., &c.”

Thomas Jefferson, then governor of Virginia, had written in May, asking Washington to take

command in that state in person, adding that, if this was done, "the difficulty would be how to keep men out of the field," and that the general's presence would make the Virginians "equal to whatever is not impossible." Jefferson's graceful compliments were not, however, what drew the commander-in-chief to the South. Greene, who was behaving extremely well there, wrote to Washington, "the inhabitants are much divided in their political sentiments, and the Whigs and Tories pursue each other with little less than savage fury." Washington hesitated a long time, mainly because he could form no idea of the plans of the British government, and when he finally decided to go after Cornwallis he tactfully wrote to Greene that he should not take command in person were it not that he knew Greene would prefer to be superseded by him than by Rochambeau, whose presence could not be avoided. Cornwallis, if he received no assistance, would be no match for the united armies, and as his superior failed to send him help, the allies, by the end of September, had the British besieged in Yorktown, where Cornwallis remained, in spite of the approaching danger, because he was every hour expecting the reënforcements promised by Clinton.

During the siege, Washington, Lincoln, and Knox were together in an exposed situation,

when one of the general's aides, according to Thatcher's Diary, remarked :—

"Sir, you are too much exposed here, had you not better step back a little?"

"Colonel Cobb," replied Washington, "if you are afraid, you have the liberty to step back."

Another instance of the general's dislike for timidity is given by Thatcher :—

"While the Reverend Mr. Evans, our chaplain, was standing near the Commander-in-Chief, a shot struck the ground so near as to cover his hat with sand ; very much agitated, he took off his hat and said, 'see here, General.' 'Mr. Evans,' replied his Excellency, with his usual composure, 'you had better carry it home and show it to your wife and children.'"

Cornwallis, shelled from two parallels, and never having expected to defend the town successfully with his present forces, was seeing his position rapidly rendered untenable, but the progress of the allies was impeded by two redoubts constructed by the British to cover their left flank. These Washington resolved to storm, and in order to encourage emulation, he had one taken by the French, the other by the Americans. The American attack was conducted by Lafayette, the advance party being led by Hamilton, whose desire for conspicuous service was thus fed by the commander who had always treated him with every generosity consistent with fairness to the army.

When surrender was practically assured, Wash-

ington said to Knox, "The work is done, and well done." When Lord Fairfax, ninety years old, and a firm loyalist, heard the news of the surrender of Cornwallis to his former protégé, he said to a servant, "Come, Joe, put me to bed, for I'm sure it is high time for me to die."

When the British marched out to surrender, Washington, wishing not to humiliate them, kept away mere spectators, and prevented any signs of exultation. Courtesies were exchanged between the British and the French, but between the Americans and the British there was only silence. Washington received the sword, mounted on Nelson, a chestnut, with white face and legs, who was, after this service, left in idleness at Mount Vernon, until he died of old age. "The treatment, in general," Cornwallis reported, "that we have received from the enemy since our surrender has been perfectly good and proper, but the kindness and attention that have been shown to us by the French officers in particular, their delicate sensibility of our situation, their generous and pressing offer of money, both public and private, to any amount, has really gone beyond what I can possibly describe."

John Adams wrote to his wife, when he heard of the surrender: —

"General Washington has struck the most sublime stroke of all in that article of the capitulation which res-

cues the tories for trials by their peers. This has struck toryism dumb and dead. I expect that all the rancor of the refugees will now be poured upon Cornwallis for it."

Cornwallis, however, had protected his Tory friends in a way that Adams knew nothing about, by obtaining a condition that he might send one vessel to New York. On that ship he transported all the loyalists.

The British officers were all invited to headquarters, except Colonel Tarleton. He applied to Lafayette, the universal mediator, to know if the omission was accidental. Lafayette referred him to Laurens, who replied, as reported by Custis, "No, Colonel Tarleton, no accident at all; intentional, I can assure you, and meant as a reproof for certain cruelties practised by the troops under your command in the campaigns of the Carolinas."

Everybody knows the reported answer of Lord George Germaine, when asked by Wraxall how Lord North took the news:—

"As he would have taken a cannon-ball in his breast," replied Lord George. "He opened his arms, exclaiming wildly, as he paced up and down the room for a few minutes, 'O God! it is all over!'—words which he repeated many times under the deepest agitation and distress."

Two days after the news reached England, the session of Parliament opened, and the people were

called upon, in the royal speech, for fresh exertions. Fox accused the ministry of "progressive madness, impolicy, or treachery"; the prime minister replied, urging further effort to obtain British rights, and Burke answered that the words of Lord North froze his blood and harrowed up his soul.

"Good God! Mr. Speaker," he exclaimed, "are we yet to be told of the rights for which we went to war? Oh, excellent rights! oh, valuable rights! Valuable you should be, for we have paid dear at parting with you. Oh valuable rights, that have cost England thirteen provinces, four islands, a hundred thousand men, and more than seventy millions of money! Oh wonderful rights, that have lost to Great Britain her empire on the ocean—her boasted grand and substantial superiority, which made the world bend before her! Oh inestimable rights, that have taken from us our rank among nations, our importance abroad, and our happiness at home; that have taken from us our trade, our manufactures, and our commerce; that have reduced us from the most flourishing empire in the world to be one of the most compact, unenviable powers on the face of the globe! Oh wonderful rights, that are likely to take from us all that yet remains! . . . Oh, miserable and infatuated men! miserable and undone country! not to know that right signified nothing without might; that the right without the power of enforcing it was nugatory and idle in the copyhold of rival states or of immense bodies!"

Many an Englishman feels to-day almost as Burke felt then about the severance of the Empire, and Americans may well learn a lesson not only

from the fairness, and even magnanimity, with which British historians treat our cause, but from the wise and patient constancy with which recent English statesmen have endured our insolence, aided us in European diplomacy, and steadfastly pursued the great object of increasing confidence between two nations, one in laws, language, and ideals.

Franklin, hearing at Paris the news of the surrender, wrote to John Adams, who was in Holland: "Most heartily do I congratulate you on the glorious news. The infant Hercules in his cradle has now strangled his second serpent."

Washington, however, even at the height of success, never lacked hints of how the democratic spirit of the people regarded the future. For instance, Governor Trumbull, congratulating him on the surrender at Yorktown, spoke of it as "an event, which will hasten the wished-for happy period, when your Excellency may retire to and securely possess the sweets of domestic felicity and glorious rest from the toils of war, surrounded by the universal applauses of a free, grateful, and happy people."

Leaving part of his troops, he started North on November 5th, stopping a few days on the way, to be present at the death of his wife's only son, who had sickened while on duty before Yorktown. The youth, after he was stricken with the camp

fever, had been assisted to see the surrender, and was then removed to Eltham, thirty miles away. When he died, Washington, embracing his wife, and much moved, said to those about him, "From this moment I adopt his two youngest children as my own."¹

Although peace was now deemed assured, Washington believed that favorable terms would best be gained by military preparations, and it was in such circumstances that he stated frequently the view now so often misrepresented.

"There is no measure so likely to produce a speedy termination of the War as vigorous preparations for meeting the enemy in full expectation of it, if they are only playing the insidious game. This will make them think of Peace in good earnest."

"If we are wise let us prepare for the worst. There is nothing which will so soon produce a speedy and honorable peace as a state of preparation for war; and we must either do this or lay our account for a patched up inglorious peace, after all the toil, blood, and treasure we have spent."

That he believed in reckoning on war after peace was assured is wholly untrue. Washington was not an imaginative man, and the few figures of speech which he uses are repeated over and over again; but his favorite vision pictured himself peacefully "floating down the river of life," or quietly existing "under his own vine and fig-

¹ Custis, 254.

tree," seeing his country happy in industry and the arts of peace.

"I indulge," he wrote to Lafayette, "a fond, perhaps an enthusiastic idea, that, as the world is evidently much less barbarous than it has been, its melioration must still be progressive; that nations are becoming more humanized in their policy, that the subjects of ambition and causes for hostility are daily diminishing; and, in fine, that the period is not very remote, when the benefits of a liberal and free commerce will pretty generally succeed to the devastations and horrors of war."

The obstacle to ending the war was, in his mind, the lack of sincere wish by the British for peace on terms satisfactory to America, and he quoted with approval Franklin's statement, "They are unable to carry on the war, and too proud to make peace." King George was certainly determined to hang on to the bitter end. "I certainly till drove to the wall will do what I can to save the Empire." John Adams's view of the situation was thus written into a journal on November 3d, 1782:—

"The present conduct of England and America resembles that of the eagle and cat. An eagle, scaling over a farmer's yard, espied a creature that he thought a hare. He pounced upon and took him up in the air, the cat seized him by the neck with her teeth, and round the body with her fore and hind claws. The eagle, finding himself scratched and pressed, bid the cat let go and

fall down. No, says the cat, I will not let go and fall, you shall stoop and let me down."

In the same journal he wrote a few days later:—

"The compliment of 'Monsieur, vous êtes le Washington de la négociation' was repeated to me by more than one person. I answered, 'Monsieur, vous me faites le plus grand honneur, et le compliment le plus sublime possible.'"

The compliment, of course, was not wholly deserved. Franklin commented on Adams's behavior abroad with his usual lucid candor: "I am persuaded, however, that he means well for his country, is always an honest man, often a wise one, but sometimes, in some things, absolutely out of his senses." It is rather amusing to see the shrewd Vergennes, when he found France cheated in the peace negotiations by the Americans, treating Franklin as led astray by his colleagues, and the brilliant French minister did not make his only penetrating prophecy when he commented on the readiness with which the Americans and the English in Paris got together, and added that France was likely to be poorly paid for securing to the United States a national existence.

As the end of the war began to look near, a new danger arose from the murmurs of officers and soldiers who wished to collect their pay. Washington, sympathizing with them, yet had no

intention of allowing them to enforce their rights improperly.

“The patience — the fortitude — the long & great suffering of this army is unexampled in history; but there is an end to all things & I fear we are very near one to this. Which more than probably will oblige me to stick very close to my flock this winter, & try like a careful physician, to prevent, if possible, the disorders getting to an incurable height.”

Hamilton, who entered Congress as a delegate from New York, after Yorktown, kept Washington informed of the doings of that body, and promptly and ably took up his great part of principal adviser to the foremost citizen. On February 7th, 1783, he warned him that there was a disposition not to pay the army, if their services should not be needed after June, but that, if the claims were pushed with moderation but with firmness, the weak-minded legislators might be influenced. He continued:—

“The difficulty will be to keep a *complaining and suffering army* within the bounds of moderation. This your Excellency’s influence must effect. In order to do it, it will be advisable not to discountenance their endeavors to procure redress, but rather, by intervention of confidential and prudent persons, *to take the direction of them*. This, however, must not appear. It is of moment to the public tranquillity that your Excellency should preserve the confidence of the army without losing that of the people. This will enable you, in case of extremity, to guide the current, and to bring order, per-

haps even good, out of confusion. 'Tis a part that requires address ; but 'tis one which your own situation, as well as the welfare of the community, points out."

This is all very frank and downright, but Washington always took Hamilton's directness, not only with no offence, but with increasing gratitude. Hamilton added as a postscript:—

"General Knox has the confidence of the army, and is a man of sense. I think he may safely be made use of."

Washington replied:—

"I shall always think myself obliged by a free communication of Sentiments, and have often thought (but suppose I thought wrong, as it did not accord with the practice of Congress) that the public interest might be benefited if the Commander-in-Chief of the Army were let more into the political and pecuniary state of our affairs than he is."

The accurate and judicious Madison has left us a valuable, authentic, and attractive account of the dashing young orator, soldier, statesman, and financier at this crisis, speaking in a private company for the integrity and determination of his chief:—

"It was certain that the army had secretly determined not to lay down their arms until due provision and a satisfactory prospect should be afforded on the subject of their pay; that there was reason to expect that a public declaration to this effect would soon be made; that plans had been agitated, if not formed, for subsisting themselves after such declaration; that, as a proof of their earnestness on this subject, the

commander was already become extremely unpopular, among almost all ranks, from his known dislike to every unlawful proceeding; that this unpopularity was daily increasing and industriously promoted by many leading characters; that his choice of unfit and indiscreet persons into his family was the pretext, and with some the real motive; but the substantial one, a desire to displace him from the respect and confidence of the army, in order to substitute General _____, as the conductor of their efforts to obtain justice. Mr. Hamilton said that he knew General Washington intimately and perfectly; that his extreme reserve, mixed sometimes with a degree of asperity of temper, both of which were said to have increased of late, had contributed to the decline of his popularity; but that his virtue, his patriotism and firmness, would, it might be depended upon, never yield to any dishonorable or disloyal plans into which he might be called; . . . that he (H.) knowing this to be his true character, wished him to be the conductor of the army in their plans for redress, in order that they might be moderated and directed to proper objects, and exclude some other leader who might foment and misguide their councils; that with this view he had taken the liberty to write to the general on this subject, and to recommend such a policy to him."

The general left in blank was Gates. Washington, as usual, acted with notable tact. Learning that anonymous and inflammatory calls for meetings to procure redress had been issued, he called the officers together, and his friends in putting Gates in the chair, astutely kept him from taking active part. Washington condemned the

irregular proceedings, eloquently stating the evils of a violent course, in an address which he read himself, after this introduction: "Gentlemen, you will permit me to put on my spectacles, for I have not only grown gray, but almost blind, in the service of my country."

"If my conduct heretofore," he said to the officers, "has not evinced to you that I have been a faithful friend to the army, my declaration of it at this time would be equally unavailing and improper. But, as I was among the first who embarked in the cause of our common country; as I have never left your side one moment but when called from you on public duty; as I have been the constant companion and witness of your distresses, and not among the last to feel and acknowledge your merits; as I have ever considered my own military reputation as inseparably connected with that of the army; as my heart has been expanded with joy when I have heard its praises, and my indignation has arisen when the mouth of detraction has been opened against it; it can scarcely be supposed, at this late stage of the war, that I am indifferent to its interests."

He is reported to have drawn tears from some of the officers, and the revolutionary plans were checked. Madison stated that "the steps taken by the general to avert the gathering storm, and his professions of inflexible adherence to his duty

to Congress and to his country, excited the most affectionate sentiments toward him."

The general wrote to Lund Washington: "The good sense, the virtue, and patient forbearance of the army on this, as upon every other trying occasion which has happened to call them into action, has again triumphed; and appeared with more lustre than ever. But if the States will not furnish the supplies required by Congress, thereby enabling the Superintendent of Finance to feed, clothe, and pay the army, if they suppose the war can be carried on without money, or that money can be borrowed without permanent funds to pay the interest of it; if they have no regard to justice because it is attended with expense," he could not answer for the consequences. General Greene wrote from Charleston, March 16th, 1783: —

"I wish to know the nature and extent of the discontent prevailing in the Northern troops. Matters are represented here in dark colors. The report spreads among our troops, and threatens a convulsion."

Hamilton, with his habitual prompt lucidity, wrote from Philadelphia the next day: —

"It is much to be regretted, though not to be wondered at, that steps of so inflammable a tendency have been taken in the army. Your Excellence, in my opinion, has acted wisely. The best way is ever, not to attempt to stem the torrent, but to direct it."

"We have, I fear, men among us, and men in trust, who have a hankering after British connections. We

have others, whose confidence in France savors of credulity."

"If no excesses take place, I shall not be sorry that ill humours have appeared. I shall not regret impotunity, if temperate, from the army."

"As to any combination of *force*, it could only be productive of the horrors of a civil war, might end in the ruin of the country, and would certainly end in the ruin of the army."

On the 25th of March the philosophic and somewhat autocratic adviser wrote:—

"Republican jealousy has in it a principle of hostility to an army, whatever be their merits, whatever be their claims to the gratitude of the community. . . . I often feel a mortification, which it would be impolite to express, that sets my passions at variance with my reason. . . .

"But, supposing the country ungrateful, what can the army do? It must submit to its hard fate . . . there would be no chance of success, without having recourse to means that would reverse our revolution. . . . I have an indifferent opinion of the honesty of this country, and ill forebodings as to its future system. . . . God send us all more wisdom."

Washington, less speculative, more patient, and more safe, replied:—

"The idea of redress by force is too chimerical to have had a place in the imagination of any serious mind in this army; but there is no telling what unhappy disturbances may result from distress, and distrust of justice, and as far as the fears and jealousies of the army are alive, I hope no resolution will be come to for disbanding or separating the lines till the accts. are

liquidated. You may rely upon it, Sir, that unhappy consequences would follow the attempt."

A few weeks later he described to Hamilton another illustration of his careful diplomacy:—

"A petition is this moment handed to me from the non-comd. officers of the Connecticut line soliciting half pay. It is well drawn, I am told, but I did not read it. I sent it back without appearing to understand the contents, because it did not come through the channel of their officers."

On July 12th Benjamin Harrison, one of the most intimate of Washington's friends, wrote from Virginia to the delegates of that state in Congress:—

"A report prevails here, said to come from Philadelphia, that our worthy general has become so unpopular in his army, that no officer will dine with him. The report is so improbable that I give no credit to it, yet I am anxious to hear from you on the subject, and also to know in what state the definitive treaty is and what now obstructs the signing of it."

They replied:—

"We do not know any color of reason for the report you mention relative to our Commander in Chief. On the contrary, we believe that his popularity, like his merit, has not suffered the smallest diminution."

It is only fair to Congress to realize that this very trouble was a partial justification of that distrust for a strong military organization which they had shown throughout the war. Happily, Washington was the least autocratic of leaders. What

Hamilton might have done in his place is hinted in a letter of March 25th, to the general: "There are two classes of men, Sir, in Congress, of very different views; one attached to State, the other to Continental politics. The last have been strenuous advocates of funding the public debt upon solid securities; the former have given every opposition in their power." He advocates blending the interests of the army with those of other creditors, as, in seeking means to restore the public credit, "the necessity and discontents of the army presented themselves as a powerful engine." He would certainly have gone a dangerous distance in using the army for civil purposes; the new America under his guidance would have taken on a more military aspect; and he could never have drawn from so jealous a civilian as John Adams so high a eulogy as this: —

"The happy turn given to the discontents of the army, by the General, is consistent with his character, which, as you observe, is above all praise, as every character is whose rule and object are duty, not interest, nor glory, which I think has been strictly true with the General from the beginning, and I trust will continue to the end. May he long live, and enjoy his reflections, and the confidence and affections of a free, grateful, and virtuous people."

The Count Dumas records this scene: —

"We were surrounded by a crowd of children carrying torches, reiterating the acclamations of the citizens;

all were eager to approach the person of him whom they called their father, and pressed so closely around us that they hindered us from proceeding. General Washington was much affected, stopped a few moments, and pressing my hand, said, 'We may be beaten by the English; it is the chance of war; but behold an army which they can never conquer.' "

It was toward the end of 1783 that the army was disbanded. In his farewell orders the commander said:—

"It is earnestly recommended to all the troops, that, with strong attachments to the Union, they should carry with them into civil society the most conciliating dispositions, and that they should prove themselves not less virtuous and useful as citizens, than they have been persevering and victorious as soldiers."

He took leave of his officers in a tavern room, where, filling a glass, he said, "With a heart full of love and gratitude I take leave of you; I most devoutly wish, that your latter days may be as prosperous and happy, as your former ones have been glorious and honorable." The officers, many of them conquered by emotion, shook his hand without speaking. He left the room, entered a barge, and waved his hat in silent farewell.

Washington formally resigned his commission to Congress on December 23d at noon, in Annapolis, where Congress had been sitting since the departure from Philadelphia. There were present also the governor, council, and legislature of Mary-

land, and citizens of Annapolis, including a gallery of ladies. The members of Congress, representing the nation, remained seated, with their hats on, but the spectators stood uncovered. Washington was led to a chair by the secretary, who, "after a decent interval," ordered silence. Thomas Mifflin, President of Congress, then informed Washington that the United States, in Congress assembled, were prepared to receive his communications. The General arose, and in a dignified manner made a brief address of congratulation and resignation, expressing obligation to the army and trust in Almighty God. Apparently much moved, he advanced to deliver to the President his commission and a copy of his address, then returned to his place, and, standing, received the answer of Congress. This ceremony, although a matter of course, has appealed to the imagination of the world. No act of Washington's has been more highly celebrated. Brougham, to whom Washington was "the greatest man of our own or any age," spoke of him as "retiring with the veneration of all parties, of all nations, of all mankind, in order that the rights of men might be conserved, and that his example might never be appealed to by the vulgar."

Sir James Mackintosh wrote in his diary: "A civil war is better than assassination and massacre; it has a system of discipline, it has laws,

duties, and virtues; but it must end in military despotism. The example of Washington is solitary."

The well-beloved and sympathetic pupil, Lafayette, wrote from France:—

"Were you but such a man as Julius Cæsar or the King of Prussia, I should almost be sorry for you at the end of the great tragedy where you are acting such a part. But, with my dear General, I rejoice at the blessings of a peace when our noble ends have been secured. Remember our Valley-Forge times; and, from a recollection of past dangers and labors, we shall be still more pleased at our present comfortable situation. . . .

"I cannot but envy the happiness of my grandchildren, when they will be about celebrating and worshipping your name. To have one of their ancestors among your soldiers, to know he had the good fortune to be the friend of your heart, will be the eternal honor in which they shall glory."

The poet Shelley, aboard an American ship, drinking to the health of Washington and the prosperity of the American Commonwealth, remarked, "As a warrior and statesman, he was righteous in all he did, unlike all who lived before or since; he never used his power but for the benefit of his fellow-creatures." Shelley is hardly an authority, but there is something pleasing in the ardor with which poets have joined with statesmen in paying tributes to the leader, whose place is forever secure in the hearts of his countrymen.

CHAPTER XV

CINCINNATUS OF THE WEST

"Where may the wearied eye repose,
When gazing on the Great;
Where neither guilty glory glows,
Nor despicable state?

"Yes — one — the first — the last — the best —
The Cincinnatus of the West,
Whom envy dared not hate
Bequeath the name of Washington,
To make man blush there was but one."— BYRON.

THE sincerity of Washington's republicanism was again brought out, at the close of the war, by the action of some discontented officers, who, seeking to strengthen the government and secure to the army its rights, suggested that he be king. The general who had been fighting for freedom, and for whom royalty and tyranny had come almost to coincide in meaning, was bitterly grieved. He answered the officers, that no occurrence in the course of the war had given him more painful sensations. Such ideas, he said: "I must view with abhorrence and reprehend with severity. For the present the communicatn. of them will rest in my own bosom, unless some further agita-

tion of the matter shall make a disclosure necessary.

"I am much at a loss to conceive what part of my conduct could have given encouragement to an address, which to me seems big with the greatest mischiefs, that can befall my Country. If I am not deceived in the knowledge of myself, you could not have found a person to whom your schemes are more disagreeable. . . . Let me conjure you, then, if you have any regard for yourself or posterity, or respect for me, to banish these thoughts from your mind, and never communicate, as from yourself or any one else, a sentiment of the like nature."

Some words which Washington wrote to the historian, William Gordon, in 1788, about this offer of a crown, certainly show with what amazing simplicity he took the occurrence:—

"I had quite forgotten the private transaction to which you allude, nor could I recall it to mind without much difficulty. If I now recollect rightly, and I believe I do (though there were several applications made to me), I am conscious of only having done my duty. As no particular credit is due for that, and as no good but some harm might result from the publication, the letter, in my judgment, had better remain in concealment."

At the same period of his life he wrote about monarchy to his trusted correspondent, John Jay:—

“I am told that even respectable characters speak of a monarchical form of government without horror. From thinking proceeds speaking; thence to acting is often but a single step. But how irrevocable and tremendous! What a triumph for our enemies to verify their predictions! What a triumph for the advocates of despotism to find, that we are incapable of governing ourselves, and that systems founded on the basis of equal liberty are merely ideal and fallacious! Would to God, that wise measures may be taken in time to avert the consequences we have but too much reason to apprehend.”

To James Madison, who had not yet begun to drift away from Washington under the lead of Jefferson, the general wrote: —

“If the system proves inefficient, conviction of the necessity of a change will be disseminated among all classes of the people. Then, and not till then, in my opinion, can it be attempted without involving all the evils of civil discord.”

Wholly as Washington deserved the glory he received for the integrity of his republicanism, it is fair to the nation to remember that probably there was never a possibility of his actually being king. As Adams proudly and vigorously said: — “Instead of adoring Washington, mankind should applaud the nation which educated him. . . . I glory in the character of a Washington, because I know him to be only an exemplification of the American character. I know that the general character of the nations of the United States is

the same with his, and that the prevalence of such sentiments and principles produced his character and preserved it, and I know there are thousands of others who have in them all the essential qualities, moral and intellectual, which compose it. . . ." Madison neatly summed it up thus: "I am not less sure that General Washington would have spurned a sceptre, if within his grasp, than I am that it was out of his reach if he had secretly sighed for it." The subject may fitly close with Franklin's words, in a codicil to his will: "My fine crab-tree walking-stick, with a gold head curiously wrought in the form of the cap of liberty, I give to my friend and the friend of mankind, General Washington. If it were a sceptre he has merited it, and would become it."

It was with the most genuine relief that Washington returned to the peace of Mount Vernon, for no passion was more constant in his active nature than the love of plantation life, and his taste for action was always partly counteracted by his dislike of friction, anxiety, and criticism.

"For henceforward my mind shall be unbent and I will endeavour to glide gently down the stream of life till I come to that abyss from whence no traveller is permitted to return."

"A mind always upon the stretch, and tortured with a diversity of perplexing circumstances, needed a respite; and I anticipate the pleasure of a little repose."

It was with real sweetness, too, and the gentleness of the sage, that, to his dearest friend and fellow-soldier, he wrote: —

“At length, my dear Marquis, I am become a private citizen on the banks of the Potomac; and under the shadow of my own vine and my own fig-tree, free from the bustle of a camp, and the busy scenes of public life, I am solacing myself with those tranquil enjoyments, of which the soldier, who is ever in pursuit of fame, the statesman, whose watchful days and sleepless nights are spent in devising schemes to promote the welfare of his own, perhaps the ruin of other countries, as if this globe was insufficient for us all, and the courtier, who is always watching the countenance of his prince, in hopes of catching a gracious smile, can have very little conception. I have not only retired from all public employments, but I am retiring within myself, and shall be able to view the solitary walk, and tread the paths of private life, with heartfelt satisfaction. Envious of none, I am determined to be pleased with all; and this, my dear friend, being the order for my march, I will move gently down the stream of life, until I sleep with my fathers.”

Living quietly on his estate, he was more than busy. Besides the minute details of his affairs, there were many more visitors since the war, and numberless letters of all kinds to answer. Some idea of the social pressure on his time may be gained from an entry in his diary for June 30th, 1785: —

“Dined with only Mrs. Washington, which, I believe, is the first instance of it since my retirement from public life.”

His health was bad, a rheumatic complaint making it sometimes difficult for him to turn himself in bed, and causing him to carry his arm in a sling. Violent headaches and nausea afflicted him. Nevertheless, he was happy. "I think with you, that the life of a husbandman of all others is the most delectable. It is honorable, it is amusing, and, with judicious management, it is profitable. To see plants rise from the earth and flourish by the superior skill and bounty of the laborer fills a contemplative mind with ideas which are more easy to be conceived than expressed." How true this was of him, and how much must have passed through his mind and heart for which his powers of utterance were inadequate. Moved by the same love of rural effect, he wrote to the famous English writer on agriculture, Arthur Young:—

"The more I am acquainted with agricultural affairs, the better I am pleased with them; insomuch that I can no where find so great satisfaction as in those innocent and useful pursuits. In indulging these feelings, I am led to reflect how much more delightful to the undebauched mind, is the task of making improvements on the earth, than all the vain glory that can be acquired from ravaging it, by the most uninterrupted career of conquest."

He saw a number of his old friends. The Fairfaxes he and Mrs. Washington invited to be "the intimate companions of our old age, as you

have been of our younger years." To Madison he wrote: "With *some*, to have differed in sentiment is to have passed the Rubicon of their friendship, although you should go no further; with others (for the honor of humanity), I hope there is more liberality." To Benjamin Harrison: —

"My friendship is not in the least lessened by the difference, which has taken place in our political sentiments, nor is my regard for you diminished by the part you have acted. Men's minds are as variant as their faces, and, where the motives to their actions are pure, the operation of the former is no more to be imputed to them as a crime, than the appearance of the latter; for both, being the work of nature, are equally unavoidable. Liberality and charity, instead of clamor and misrepresentation (which latter only serve to foment the passions without enlightening the understanding), ought to govern in all disputes about matters of importance."

Some of his friends were dropping away. When the nearest among them, General Greene, went, Washington offered to pay for the education of his son. When Colonel Tilghman died, Washington told Jefferson that he "left as fair a reputation as ever belonged to a human character. Thus some of the pillars of the revolution fall. Others are mouldering by insensible degrees. May our country never want props to support the glorious fabric." When his brother, John Augustine, died, he wrote, "To attempt an expression of

my sorrow on this occasion would be as feebly described, as it would be unavailing when related." To his friend Colonel Humphreys he wrote, "I condole with you on the loss of your Parents; but as they lived to a good old age you could not be unprepared for the shock, tho' it is painful to bid an everlasting adieu to those we love, or revere, — Reason, Religion, and Philosophy may soften the anguish of it, but time alone can eradicate it."

With thoughts of death so frequent, it is no wonder that his mind dwelt sometimes on what posterity might think of him. We shall never know why his letters to Mrs. Washington were destroyed by her, but we catch something of his feeling in such expressions as these: —

"I will frankly declare to you, my dear Doctor, that any memoirs of my life, distinct and unconnected with the general history of the war, would rather hurt my feelings than tickle my pride whilst I lived. I had rather glide gently down the stream of life, leaving it to posterity to think and say what they please of me, than by any act of mine to have vanity or ostentation imputed to me. . . . I do not think vanity is a trait of my character."

Again: —

"In a former letter I informed you, my dear Humphreys, that if I had *talents* for it, I have not *leisure* to turn my thoughts to Commentaries. A consciousness of a defective education, and a certainty of the want of time, unfit me for such an undertaking."

To Weems, the most popular of all his biographers, the collector or inventor of so many stories of the little hatchet type, he cannot, judging from that artist's production, have furnished much information. In his diary for 1787 is this entry: "*March 3.* — The Rev. M. Weems and y^g Doct^r Craik who came here yesterday in the afternoon left this about Noon for Port Tob^c." The world loves legends, and Weems supplied them in abundance.

Painters and sculptors were also busy seeking his and their own immortality.

"I am so hackneyed to the touches of the painter's pencil, that I am *now* altogether at their beck; and sit, like Patience on a monument, whilst they are delineating the lines of my face. It is a proof, among many others, of what habit and custom can accomplish. At first I was as impatient at the request, and as restive under the operation, as a colt is of the saddle. The next time I submitted very reluctantly, but with less flouncing. Now, no dray-horse moves more readily to his thill than I to the painter's chair."

Of his many visitors some have left records, slight in themselves, which nevertheless help us to see him as he lived.

"The first evening," says one of them, "I spent under the wing of his hospitality, we sat a full hour at table by ourselves, without the least interruption, after the family had retired. I was extremely oppressed by a severe cold and excessive

coughing, contracted by the exposure of a harsh winter journey. He pressed me to use some remedies, but I declined doing so. As usual after retiring, my coughing increased. When some time had elapsed, the door of my room was gently opened, and on drawing my bed-curtains, to my utter astonishment, I beheld Washington himself, standing at my bedside, with a bowl of hot tea in his hand."

Albert Gallatin, who thought that Washington was the most inaccessible man he ever saw in his life, tells of an experience he had, on an exploring tour, in 1784, when, being near Washington, and hearing a mathematical problem stated by him, he volunteered the answer. Washington gave him such a look of severity as he had never had before or since, worked out his own conclusion, and then, wishing to do justice, said, "You are right, young man."

All the personal impressions and anecdotes that exist of him confirm what could be guessed from his letters,—that his sense of humor was of the slightest. This might be surmised from a story which a son of Colonel Henry Lee wrote to Irving: Washington, at table at Mount Vernon, spoke of being in want of carriage horses, and asked Lee if he knew where he could get a pair.

"I have a fine pair, General," replied Lee, "but you cannot get them."

“Why not?”

“Because you will never pay more than half price for anything; and I must have full price for my horses.”

Mrs. Washington laughed, and her parrot joined in.

“Ah, Lee,” said Washington, “you are a funny fellow. See, that bird is laughing at you.”

David Howell of Rhode Island has preserved in a letter¹ a characteristic scene:—

“The President, with all the present members, chaplains, and great officers of Congress, had the honor of dining at the General’s table last Friday. The tables were spread under a marquise or tent taken from the British. The repast was elegant, but the General’s company crowned the whole. As I had the good fortune to be seated facing the General, I had the pleasure of hearing all his conversation. The President of Congress was seated on his right, and the Minister of France on his left. I observed with much pleasure that the General’s front was uncommonly open and pleasant; the contracted, pensive phiz betokening deep thought and much care, which I noticed at Prospect Hill in 1775, is done away, and a pleasant smile and sparkling vivacity of wit and humor succeeds. On the President observing that in the present situation of our affairs, he believed that Mr. (Robert) Morris had his hands full, the General replied at the same instant; ‘he wished he had his pockets full too.’ On M. Peters observing that the man who made these cups (for we drank wine out of silver cups) was turned a Quaker preacher, the Gen-

¹ Quoted in Conways’ “Life of Paine.”

eral replied that 'he wished he had turned a Quaker preacher before he made the cups.' You must also hear the French Minister's remark on the General's humor — 'You tink de penitence would have been good for de cups.'"

The topic of marriage brought out this playful effort to Chastellux, author of one of the best-known books of travel in America at that period: —

"I was, as you may well suppose, not less delighted than surprised, to meet the plain American words, 'my wife.' A wife! Well, my dear Marquis, I can hardly refrain from smiling to find you are caught at last. I saw, by the eulogium you often made on the happiness of domestic life in America, that you had swallowed the bait, and that you would as surely be taken, one day or another, as that you were a philosopher and a soldier. So your day has at length come. I am glad of it, with all my heart and soul. It is quite good enough for you. Now you are well served for coming to fight in favor of the American rebels, all the way across the Atlantic Ocean, by catching that terrible contagion — domestic felicity — which time, like the small pox or the plague, a man can have only once in his life: because it commonly lasts him (at least with us in America — I don't know how you manage these matters in France) for his whole life time."

His feeble sense of humor adds a touch of pathos to a picture which, for all its glory, is predominantly sad. In his early life the adventures give excitement and romance, but later we

often catch a tone of persistent and lofty gloom. He spoke of himself as "descending into the shades of darkness." Like an old man, he gave wise counsel to his young relatives. With most of his family he was on patriarchal and amicable terms. His mother worried him, and his view of her shows how easily fictions creep into history, where she stands as a figure wholly grand. No doubt she was a vigorous old woman, but she must have been in many ways a difficult relative to handle:—

"While I am talking of my mother and her concerns, I am impelled to mention some things which have given, and still continue to give me pain. About two years ago, a gentleman of my acquaintance informed me, that it was in contemplation, to move for a pension for her in the Virginia Assembly; that he did not suppose I knew of the measure proposed; and that he did not believe it would be very agreeable to me to have it done; but wished, however, to know my sentiments thereon. I instantly wrote him, that it was new and astonishing to me, and begged that he would prevent the motion if possible; or oppose it, if made; for I was sure she had not a child that would not be hurt at the idea of her becoming a pensioner—or in other words, receiving *charity* from the public. Since then I have heard nothing of *that* matter; but learn from very good authority, that she is, upon all occasions and in all companies, complaining of the hardness of the times, of her wants and difficulties; and if not in direct terms, at least by strong innuendoes, endeavours to excite a belief that times are much altered, &c., &c., which not only makes

her appear in an unfavorable point of view, but *those also* who are connected with her. That she can have no *real* wants, that may not easily be supplied, I am sure of. *Imaginary* wants are indefinite; and oftentimes insatiable; because they sometimes are boundless, and always changing. The reason of my mentioning these matters, is that you may enquire into her real wants, and see what is necessary to make her comfortable. If the rent is insufficient to do this, while I have anything, I will part with it to make her so; and wish you to take measures in my behalf accordingly. At the same time, I wish you to represent to her in delicate terms, the impropriety of her complaints, and *acceptance* of favors, even where they are voluntarily offered, from any but relations. It will not do to touch upon this subject in a letter to her, and therefore I have avoided it."

He decided, however, to mention the general subject to her, and as his letter is one of few which let us into the family circle, it is worth quoting extensively:—

"Whilst I have a shilling left, you shall have part, if it is wanted, whatever my own distresses may be. What I shall then give, I shall have credit for; now I have not, for tho' I have received nothing from your Quarter, and am told that every farthing goes to you, and have moreover paid between 3 and 4 hundred pounds besides out of my own pocket; I am viewed as a delinquent, and considered perhaps by the world as (an) unjust and undutiful son. . . . Further, my sincere and pressing advice to you is, to break up house-keeping, hire out all the rest of your servants except a man and a maid, and live with one of your children.

This would relieve you entirely from the cares of this world, and leave your mind at ease to reflect undisturbedly on that which ought to come. On this subject I have been full with my Brother John, and it was determined he should endeavour to get you to live with him. He alas is no more, and three, only of us remain. My house is at your service, and (I) would press you most sincerely and most devoutly to accept it, but I am sure, and candor requires me to say, it will never answer your purposes in any shape whatsoever. For in truth it may be compared to a well resorted tavern, as scarcely any strangers who are going from north to south, or from south to north, do not spend a day or two at it. This would, were you to be an inhabitant of it, oblige you to do one of 3 things: 1st. to be always dressing to appear in company; 2d, to come into (the room) in a dishabille, or 3d, to be as it were a prisoner in your own chamber. The first you'll not like; indeed, for a person at your time of life it would be too fatiguing. The 2d, I should not like, because those who resort here are, as I observed before, strangers and people of the first distinction. And the 3d, more than probably, would not be pleasing to either of us. Nor indeed could you be retired in any room in my house; for what with the sitting up of company, the noise and bustle of servants, and many other things, you would not be able to enjoy that calmness and serenity of mind, which in my opinion you ought now to prefer to every other consideration in life. . . . A man, a maid, the phaeton, and two horses, are all you would want. To lay in a sufficiency for the support of these would not require $\frac{1}{4}$ of your income, the rest would purchase every necessary you could possibly want, and place it in your power to be serviceable to those with whom you may live, which no doubt would be agreeable to all parties."

He sums up the situation philosophically by saying that if she is so disposed, she may be perfectly happy; "for happiness depends more upon the internal frame of a person's own mind, than on the externals in the world."

Occupied in such ways with agricultural and domestic interests, longing for isolation and quiet, he nevertheless saw the political situation making his former rustic and beloved existence impossible. It was inevitable, in such a crisis, that the leading personality in the new country should be appealed to on every public question. Moreover, there was some truth in what Madison said, "A mind like his, capable of great views, and which has long been occupied with them, cannot bear a vacancy." He desired to be left in peace, and at the same time he instinctively took hold of the leading questions. One of the first problems which presented difficulty was made by the Virginia legislature's offer to him of one hundred and fifty shares in the Potomac and James River Companies, as a testimonial to his interest in land improvements—a gift rather honorary than lucrative, as Madison expressed it, but open to misinterpretation. How strongly Washington was interested in the encouragement of agriculture is shown in these words to Lafayette:—

"I wish to see the sons and daughters of the world in Peace and busily employed in the more agreeable

amusement of fulfilling the first and great commandment — *Increase and Multiply*: as an encouragement to which we have opened the fertile plains of the Ohio to the poor, the needy, and the oppressed of the Earth; any one therefore who is heavy laden or who wants land to cultivate, may repair thither and abound, as in the Land of promise, with milk and honey; — the ways are preparing, and the roads will be made easy, thro' the channels of Potomac & James river."

The predicament in which he was put by the proposed public recompense for this interest was thus described by Madison to Jefferson, in about the same words used by Washington to Harrison: "The donation presented to General Washington embarrasses him much. On one side, he disliked the appearance of slighting the bounty of his country, and of an ostentatious disinterestedness. On the other, an acceptance of reward in any shape was irreconcilable with the law he had imposed upon himself."

Washington asked his friends for their opinions. Jefferson advised him to decline, if he could afford it, as acceptance would lower his reputation and refusal would heighten it. Harrison leaned against acceptance, on account of "the censoriousness of human nature." General Knox wrote, "My jealousy for your fame is so high that I should prefer seeing you, Cincinnatus-like, following your plough, rather than accept the least pecuniary reward whatever." He suggested that the proceeds of the fund

might go to the widows and children of dead and wounded soldiers. Patrick Henry favored acceptance, on account of the damper which would be put on the enterprise by his refusal of the shares, and suggested that if he deemed it inadmissible to hold them in the way in which the law gave them, he would be at liberty to suggest another disposition of the fund. Admiral Dewey, in a similar predicament after the Spanish War, made an error, and paid a heavy penalty for it. Washington, whose sure-footed tact never erred, finally met his situation satisfactorily by giving his shares to educational institutions.

In this period of half retirement his public outlook, pessimistic sometimes, was usually serene and hopeful.

“Indeed, the rights of mankind, the privileges of the people, and the true principles of liberty, seem to have been more generally discussed and better understood throughout Europe since the American revolution, than they were at any former period.”

“In whatever manner the nations of Europe shall endeavor to keep up their prowess in war, and their balance of power in peace, it will be obviously our policy to cultivate tranquillity at home and abroad ; and to extend our agriculture and commerce as far as possible.”

“I have been writing to our friend General Knox this day to procure me homespun broadcloth of the Hartford fabric, to make a suit of clothes for myself. I hope it will not be a great while before it will be unfashion-

able for a gentleman to appear in any other dress. Indeed, we have already been too long subject to British prejudices. I use no porter or cheese in my family but such as is made in America. Both those articles may now be purchased of an excellent quality."

"It is to be regretted, I confess, that Democratical States must always *feel* before they can *see*: — it is this that makes their governments slow—but the people will be right at last."

Among the domestic problems which fronted the retired leader few were more ominous than slavery. Several of his friends were ardent abolitionists, among them Lafayette, to whom Washington wrote:—

"The scheme, my dear Marqs, which you propose as a precedent to encourage the emancipation of the black people of this Country from that state of Bondage in wch. they are held, is a striking evidence of the benevolence of your Heart. I shall be happy to join you in so laudable a work."

"Your late purchase of an estate in the colony of Cayenne, with a view of emancipating the slaves on it, is a generous and noble proof of your humanity. Would to God a like spirit would diffuse itself generally into the minds of the people of this country. But I despair of seeing it. Some petitions were presented to the Assembly, at its last session, for the abolition of slavery, but they could scarcely obtain a reading. To set them afloat at once would, I really believe, be productive of much inconvenience and mischief; but by degrees it certainly might, and assuredly ought to be effected; and that too by legislative authority."

Madison wrote to Washington in 1785: —

“The pulse of the house of delegates was felt on Thursday with regard to the general manumission, by a petition presented on that subject. It was refuted without dissent; but not without an avowed patronage of its principles by sundry respectable members. A motion was made to throw it under the table, which was treated with as much indignation, on one side, as the petition itself was on the other. There are several petitions before the House against any step towards freeing the slaves, and even praying for a repeal of the law which licenses particular manumissions.”

The Rev. Thomas Coke, in his Journal,¹ under date of May 26th, 1785, gives an account of a dinner with Washington at his seat on the Potomac. Coke and the bishop who accompanied him asked their host to sign a petition for the emancipation of the negroes. “He informed us that he was of our sentiments, and had signified his thoughts on the subject to most of the great men of the state; that he did not deem it proper to sign the petition, but if the Assembly took it into consideration, would signify his sentiments to the Assembly by a letter.” Naturally his legitimate mind favored only legal procedure. He believed that those “whose *misfortune* it is to have slaves as attendants” should not be tampered with by private societies.

¹ Published in *Magazine of American History*, 1880, p. 158.

“I hope it will not be conceived from these observations, that it is my wish to hold the unhappy people, who are the subject of this letter, in slavery. I can only say, that there is not a man living, who wishes more sincerely than I do to see a plan adopted for the abolition of it; but there is only one proper and effectual mode by which it can be accomplished, and that is by legislative authority; and this, as far as my suffrage will go, shall never be wanting. But when slaves, who are happy and contented with their present masters, are tampered with and seduced to leave them; when a conduct of this sort begets discontent on one side and resentment on the other; and when it happens to fall on a man, whose purse will not measure with that of the society, and he loses his property for want of means to defend it; it is oppression in such a case, and not humanity in any, because it introduces more evils than it can cure.”

One matter in which Washington became more involved than was comfortable taught him something about the spirit of the nation, which was more democratic than he, as it was less democratic than, for instance, Jefferson. Of a benevolent society, called the Cincinnati, composed of the officers of the late war, Washington was chosen president. There was much hostile criticism of the association, on the ground that it tended to establish class distinctions. In these days we merely smile at certain Daughters and Sons of various things, but then, with the nature of our society undetermined, there was genuine

fear of aristocracy. Lafayette wrote to Washington from Paris:—

“Most of the Americans here are virulent against an Association. Wadsworth must be excepted, and Dr. Franklin said little; but Jay, Adams, and all the others, warmly blame the army. You easily guess I am not remiss in opposing them. However, if it is found that the heredity endangers the true principles of democracy, I am as ready as any man to renounce it. You will be my compass, my dear General.”

Washington advised the total abolition of hereditary membership and many objectionable secondary features, and the clamor subsided. How he finally escaped altogether, with his usual adroitness, from an unpleasant position he thus related to Madison:—

“On the one hand, I might be charged with dereliction of the officers, who had nobly supported me, and had even treated me with uncommon attention and attachment; on the other, with supporting a measure incompatible with republican principles. I thought it best, therefore, without assigning this (the principal) reason, to decline the presidency and to excuse my attendance on the ground, which is firm and just, of necessity of attending to my private concerns, and in conformity to my determination of spending the remainder of my days in a state of retirement; and to indisposition occasioned by rheumatic complaints with which at times I am a good deal afflicted.”

Thus Washington, living at Mount Vernon, the first citizen, divided his time between farming

and thinking. The time was approaching when the Rubicon must be crossed. A convention was about to be held, to draw up a constitution for the United States. Should it be left to other men, while he looked on from beneath his fig-tree? His friends, like his own feelings, pulled him in opposite directions. General Knox, wishing him to stand for mankind and for no party, advised him to have nothing to do with any political operations in which the opinions of men were divided. Citizens of a different stamp, like Jay, filled his mind with their convictions, whetting his appetite, and, more important than anybody else, Alexander Hamilton, in a masterly series of letters, eagerly kept Washington informed of all the political and financial principles that were being discussed. The fighting men won. Washington naturally, and through his own long and bitter experience, believed in a strong central government; and his ablest acquaintances wrote stirringly to him about the dangers of weakness. In order, therefore, to throw his influence in the scale for union, well knowing the possibility that he might return no longer a free man, but again the servant of his country,—he decided to leave his home and to attend the Constitutional Convention.

CHAPTER XVI

FIRST IN PEACE

"Since the thing is established, I would wish it not to be altered during the life of our great leader, whose executive talents are superior to those, I believe, of any man in the world." — JEFFERSON.

"A man was needed who possessed a commanding power over the popular passions, but over whom those passions had no power. That man was Washington." — FISHER AMES.

THERE was but one man, besides Washington, whose rank as a citizen would permit for a moment the consideration of him for the presidency of the Convention, and even that man's eminence hardly made the question doubtful. Inventor, diplomat, philosopher, patriarch that he was, devoting the latest years of his long life to inestimable services to his country, Franklin was nevertheless the second and not the first citizen of America. When, therefore, Franklin's own state, Pennsylvania, nominated Washington, there could be no opposition, and the general presided over the deliberations which ended in the Constitution,—a victory, on the whole, for the party which had most of his sympathies. He himself took small part always in public debates. One

of his reported observations, during this convention, in answer to a member who proposed a clause limiting a standing army to five thousand, sounds too witty to be authentic. Washington replied that he should be satisfied with that, provided there were a provision that no enemy should presume to invade the United States with more than three thousand. Franklin also said little, and a witness of the proceedings remarked that although he was the greatest philosopher of the age he did not shine much in debate. Hamilton was present, already celebrated for scholarship and ability, and he came to the fray "with the searchings of philosophy," "charged with interesting matter," now penetrating, now light, small, lean, stiff, vain, and profoundly interesting, the intellectual leader of the predominant party. The agreeable and industrious Madison, fair minded and well informed, took a leading place in the debates, and has left to posterity the best account of them. In those debates is recorded the only instance in which Washington, as presiding officer, ventured into argument.

"When the President rose, for the purpose of putting the question (on representation), he said, that although his situation had hitherto restrained him from offering his sentiments on questions depending in the House, and, it might be thought, ought now to impose silence on him, yet he could not forbear expressing his wish

that the change proposed might take place. It was much to be desired that the objections to the plan recommended might be made as few as possible. The smallness of the proportion of Representatives had been considered by many members of the Convention an insufficient security for the rights and interests of the people. He acknowledged that it had always appeared to himself among the exceptional parts of the plan ; and late as the present moment was for admitting admendments, he thought this of so much consequence, that it would give him much satisfaction to see it adopted."

With Washington's practice in political gatherings coincides an opinion contained in one of his letters : —

"The only advice I will offer to you on the occasion (if you have a mind to command the attention of the House), is to speak seldom, but to important subjects, except such as particularly relate to your constituents ; and, in the former case, make yourself perfectly master of the subject. Never exceed a decent warmth, and submit your sentiments with diffidence. A dictatorial stile, though it may carry conviction, is always accompanied with disgust."

Both Gouverneur and Robert Morris were in the brilliant group which determined the form of government for our country, and possibly it is not beneath the dignity of biography to pause for a moment, amid these serious concerns, over an incident, recorded by Martin Van Buren, in which the two Morris'es and Hamilton learned some-

thing about Washington's demeanor. Hamilton, during the convention, remarked to the Morrises and others, that Washington was reserved and aristocratic even to his intimate friends, and allowed no one to be familiar. Gouverneur Morris, calling this idea a mere fancy, asserted that he could be as familiar with Washington as with any other friend. Hamilton offered Morris a wine supper for himself and a dozen friends if he would, at the next reception evening, gently slap Washington on the back, and say, "My dear General, how happy I am to see you look so well."

Morris made the venture. Washington withdrew the hand which he had given, stepped suddenly back, and fixed his eye on Morris with an angry glance, until the adventurous friend retreated and sought refuge in the crowd, which had looked on in silence.

There were many other famous men in this most notable assembly, with many shades of political principles, and it was a hard fight between the friends and the opponents of a strong central government. "I almost despair," Washington wrote to Hamilton during the struggle, "of seeing a favorable issue to the proceedings of our convention, and do therefore repent having had any agency in the business.

"The men, who oppose a strong and energetic

government, are in my opinion narrow-minded politicians, or are under the influence of local views. The apprehension expressed by them, that the *people* will not accede to the form proposed, is the ostensible, not the real cause of opposition."

Various amendments were made to the first draft, and of them Washington wrote to Jefferson:—

"I can say there are scarcely any of the amendments, which have been suggested, to which I have much objection, except that which goes to the prevention of direct taxation."

Of the completed work Washington wrote to Lafayette:—

"It is the result of four months' deliberation. It is now a child of fortune, to be fostered by some and buffeted by others. What will be the general opinion, or the reception of it, is not for me to decide; nor shall I say any thing for or against it. If it be good I suppose it will work its way; if bad, it will recoil on the framers."

The motion to sign the Constitution was drawn up by Gouverneur Morris, but, in order to give a better chance of success, was put into the hands of Dr. Franklin. The venerable genius of common sense arose, with a written speech in his hand, but his words were read aloud by another. "I confess," Franklin tactfully began, "that there are several parts of this Constitution which I do not at present approve, but I am not sure I shall

never approve them. For, having lived long, I have experienced many instances of being obliged, by better information or fuller consideration, to change opinions, even on important subjects, which I once thought right, but found to be otherwise. It is therefore that, the older I grow, the more apt I am to doubt my own judgment, and to pay more respect to the judgment of others."

In spite of Franklin, supported in debate by Hamilton, Morris, and others, Randolph, Mason, and Gerry refused to sign. As the other members were signing, Franklin, looking toward the chair in which Washington sat, behind which was the picture of a rising sun, observed to some members near him that painters found it difficult to distinguish in their art between a rising and a setting sun. "I have," he proceeded, "often and often, in the course of the session, and the vicissitudes of my hopes and fears as to its issue, looked at that behind the president, without being able to tell whether it was rising or setting; but now, at length, I have the happiness to know that it is a rising, and not a setting sun."

There is a tradition that when Washington was about to sign the Constitution, he rose from his seat, and, holding the pen in his hand, after a short pause, pronounced these words, "Should the States upset this excellent Constitution, the probability is that an opportunity will never again offer

to cancel another in peace,—the next will be drawn in blood.”

Madison later wrote to Edward Everett about this signature:—

“I can testify, from my personal knowledge, that no member of the Convention appeared to sign the Instrument with more cordiality than he did, nor to be more anxious for its ratification. I have, indeed, the most thorough conviction, from the best evidence, that he never wavered in the part he took in giving it its sanction and support.”

Of Hamilton's view Chief Justice Marshall says, “It was known that, in his judgment, the Constitution of the United States was rather chargeable with imbecility than censurable for its too great strength.” Jay was not sure that the government rested on principles sufficiently stable. “Government without liberty,” he added, “is a curse; but, on the other hand, liberty without government is far from being a blessing.” Patrick Henry, on the other hand, said the Constitution “squinted toward monarchy,” and opposed Madison's election to the Senate because he had favored the form adopted. He also, according to Madison, declared his aversion to the Constitution to be such that he could not take the oath, although he would remain in peaceable submission. James Langdon wrote to Washington from Portsmouth that the agitation there against the

principles adopted "frightened the people almost out of what little senses they had." Of these fears of too much power Washington said:—

"No man is a warmer advocate for proper restraints and wholesome checks in every department of government than I am; but I have never yet been able to discover the propriety of placing it absolutely out of the power of men to render essential services, because a possibility remains of their doing ill."

The states gradually fell into line. Of the last one Washington wrote:—

"Suffice it to say, *it is universally believed, that the scales are ready to drop from the eyes, and the infatuation to be removed from the heart, of Rhode Island.* May this be the case before that inconsiderable people shall have filled up the measure of iniquity before it shall be too late."

"As the infamy of the conduct of Rhode Island outgoes all precedent, so the influence of her counsels can be of no prejudice. There is no other state or description of Men but would blush to be involved in a connection with the paper money junto of that anarchy. God grant that the honest men may acquire an ascendancy before irrevocable ruin shall confound the innocent with the guilty."

Of the Virginia situation he wrote to Madison: "The accounts from Richmond are indeed, very unpropitious to federal measures. The whole proceedings of the Assembly, *it is said*, may be summed up in one word—to wit: that the edicts of Mr. H(enry) are enregistered with less opposi-

tion by the members of that body, than those of the Grand Monarch are in the Parliament of France. He has only to say, let this be Law, and it is Law." Washington attended the Virginia convention, where Henry, Monroe, and Mason vainly opposed ratification. Monroe, seeing ahead what the country was likely to ask of Washington, wrote to Jefferson:—

"To forsake the honorable retreat to which he had retired and risque the reputation he had so deservedly acquired, manifested a zeal for the publick interest, that could after so many and illustrious services, and at this stage of his life, scarcely have been expected from him. Having however commenc'd again on the publick theatre, the course which he takes becomes not only highly interesting to him but likewise so to us: the human character is not perfect; if he partakes of those qualities which we have too much reason to believe are almost inseparable from the frail nature of our being, the people of America will perhaps be lost. Be assured his influence carried this Government; for my own part, I have a boundless confidence in him nor have I any reason to believe he will ever furnish occasion for withdrawing it. More is to be apprehended if he takes a part in the public counsels again, as he advances in age, from the designs of those around him than from any disposition of his own."

Washington, even after the Constitution was adopted, feared radical amendments, and was much interested in all measures which might increase the public confidence in the federal sys-

tem. "As a Constitutional door is opened for future amendments and alterations, I think it would be wise in the People to accept what is offered to them and I wish it may be by as great a majority of them as it was by that of the Convention; but this is hardly to be expected because the importance and sinister views of too many characters, will be affected by the change. Much will depend however upon literary abilities, and the recommendation of it by good pens should be openly, I mean, publicly afforded in the Gazettes." Much the most important effort of literary ability to influence public opinion was put into the *Federalist*, a series of papers on government written by Madison, Jay, and, above all, by Hamilton, who was "Publius." "Upon the whole," wrote Washington, "I doubt whether the opposition to the constitution will not ultimately be productive of more good than evil. It has called forth in its defence abilities which would not perhaps have been otherwise expected that have thrown new light upon the science of government. It has given the rights of man a full and fair discussion, and explained them in so clear and forcible a manner, as cannot fail to make a lasting impression upon those, who read the best publications on the subject, and particularly the pieces under the signature of Publius." To Hamilton himself Washington wrote: —

“Without an unmeaning compliment, I will say, that I have seen no other so well calculated, in my judgment, to produce conviction on an unbiassed mind as the *production* of your *triumvirate*. When the transient circumstances and fugitive performances, which attended this crisis shall have disappeared, that work will merit the notice of posterity, because in it are candidly and ably discussed the principles of freedom and the topics of government, which will be always interesting to mankind, so long as they shall be connected in civil society.”

Thus far history has justified his prophecy.

Lafayette regretted that the new Constitution contained no declaration of rights, and feared the power of the President. The latter objection, however, might, he thought, be lessened, since Washington could not refuse to be the first President, and if he found the power too great, it could be diminished. “You only can settle that political machine; and I foresee it will furnish an admirable chapter to your history.” On the danger of the President’s power, Washington replied:—

“Guarded so effectually as the proposed constitution is, in respect to the prevention of bribery and undue influence in the choice of president, *I confess I differ widely myself from Mr. Jefferson and you, as to the necessity or expediency of rotation in that appointment.*¹ . . . There cannot in my judgment be the least danger, that the president will by any practicable intrigue ever be able to continue himself one moment in office, much

¹ The italics are mine.

less perpetuate himself in it, but in the last stage of corrupted morals and political depravity; and even then, there is as much danger that any other species of domination would prevail. Though, when a people shall have become incapable of governing themselves, and fit for a master, it is of little consequence from what quarter he comes."

Of his own position he said: —

"In answer to the observations you make on the probability of my election to the presidency, knowing me as you do, I need only say, that it has no enticing charms and no fascinating allurements for me. However, it might not be decent for me to say I would refuse to accept, or even to speak much about an appointment, which may never take place; for, in so doing, one might possibly incur the application of the moral resulting from that fable, in which the fox is represented as inveighing against the sourness of the grapes, because he could not reach them. All that it will be necessary to add, my dear Marquis, in order to show my decided predilections is, that, (at my time of life and under my circumstances,) the increasing infirmities of nature and the growing love of retirement do not permit me to entertain a wish beyond that of living and dying an honest man on my own farm."

To Hamilton he wrote in almost the same words, and added: "While you and some others who are acquainted with my heart would acquit, the world and posterity might possibly accuse me (of) inconsistency and ambition. Still I hope I shall always possess firmness and virtue enough to maintain (what I consider the most enviable

of all titles), the character of *an honest man*." To Henry Lee he wrote:—

"Should my unfeigned reluctance to accept the office be overcome by a deference for the reasons and opinions of my friends, might I not, after the declarations I have made (and heaven knows they were made in the sincerity of my heart), in the judgment of the impartial world and of posterity, be chargeable with levity and inconsistency, if not with rashness and ambition? Nay farther, would there not even be some apparent foundation for the two former charges? Now justice to myself and tranquillity of conscience require, that I should act a part, if not above imputation, at least capable of vindication. Nor will you conceive me to be too solicitous for reputation. Though I prize as I ought the good opinion of my fellow citizens, yet, if I know myself, I would not seek or retain popularity at the expense of one social duty or moral virtue.

"While doing what my conscience informed me was right, as it respected my God, my country, and myself, I could despise all the party clamor and unjust censure, which must be expected from some, whose personal enmity might be occasioned by their hostility to the government. I am conscious, that I fear alone to give any real occasion for obloquy, and that I do not dread to meet with unmerited reproach. And certain I am, whensoever I shall be convinced the good of my country requires my reputation to be put in risk, regard for my own fame will not come in competition with an object of so much magnitude."

He added that if he declined the task, it would be because some other man could be found equally capable of executing it. To his friend Benjamin

Harrison he wrote that, if he did take the office, "my errors shall be of the head, not of the heart."

The desire to have him at the head of the government was by no means unanimous. Some of the extreme Anti-Federalists asserted that he was more used to military command than to political philosophy, and a few ventured the opinion that he was a fool by nature and Franklin a fool from age. The Tory historian Jones wrote: "The friends of the rebel chief say he has virtues. I suppose he has: I say 'Curse on his virtues! they've undone his country.'" Jefferson wrote to Edward Carrington: "Our jealousy is only put to sleep by the unlimited confidence we all repose in the person to whom we all look as our President. After him inferior characters may perhaps succeed and awaken us to the danger which his merit has led us into."

The faith which Europe had in him was unbounded. Paul Jones wrote: "Your name alone, Sir, has established in Europe a confidence, that has, for some time before, been entirely wanting in American concerns." Alfieri, in 1788, addressed his tragedy, "The First Brutus," "to the most illustrious and free citizen, General Washington." Part of the dedication read: "The name of the deliverer of America alone can stand on the title-page of the tragedy of the deliverer of Rome. To you, excellent and most rare citizen,

I therefore dedicate this, without hinting at even a fraction of the praises due to you, all of which I deem implied in the mere mention of your name. . . . Happy are you, who have been able to build your glory on the sublime and eternal base of love for your country, proved in deeds!"

When it was settled that Washington must accept the presidency, he wrote to Knox:—

"In confidence I tell you, (with the *world* it would obtain little credit,) that my movements to the chair of government will be accompanied by feelings not unlike those of a culprit, who is going to the place of his execution; so unwilling am I, in the evening of a life nearly consumed in public cares, to quit a peaceful abode for an ocean of difficulties, without that competency of political skill, abilities, and inclination, which are necessary to manage the helm."

On April 16th, 1789, he wrote in his diary:—

"About ten o'clock, I bade adieu to Mount Vernon, to private life, and to domestic felicity; and, with a mind oppressed with more anxious and painful sensations than I have words to express, set out for New York in company with Mr. Thomson and Colonel Humphreys, with the best disposition to render service to my country in obedience to its call, but with less hope of answering its expectations."

There were ovations along the route, and ceremonies after he reached New York. The oath was administered on April 30th, and an address delivered to Congress. Washington was dressed in

full military uniform, and carried a sheathed sword. Fisher Ames has left this picture of him:—

“I was present in the pew with the President, and must assure you that, after making all deductions for the delusion of one’s fancy in regard to characters, I still think of him with more veneration than for any other person. Time has made havoc upon his face. That, and many other circumstances not to be reasoned about, conspire to keep up the awe which I brought with me. He addressed the two Houses in the Senate-chamber; it was a very touching scene, and quite of a solemn kind. His aspect grave, almost to sadness; his modesty, actually shaking; his voice deep, a little tremulous, and so low as to call for close attention; added to the series of objects presented to the mind, and overwhelming it, produced emotions of the most affecting kind upon the members.”

It is little wonder that Washington entered upon his new task with genuine gloom. For many years cautious, his dislike of a new and dangerous position was increased by age; of which, in this, his fifty-eighth year, many signs were manifest to him. He yielded only because something had to be done, and he was obviously the man to do it. His love for his family and his farm had increased during the fatigues of the Revolution. “When I had judged, upon the best appreciation I was able to form of the circumstances which related to myself, that it was my duty to embark again on the tempestuous and uncertain ocean of public

life, I gave up all expectations of private happiness in this world." He had a wish for happiness, — to end his life where alone his declining years found comfort, where, as he said, he had concentrated all his schemes, views, wishes, — "within the narrow circle of domestic enjoyment." He was depressed not only by the prospect of effort and worry over new problems, but by the fear that failure in his course might lead to censures as extravagant as the praises which he then enjoyed. "All see," he said, "and most admire, the glare which hovers round the external happiness of elevated office. To me there is nothing in it beyond the lustre, which may be reflected from its connexion with a power of promoting human felicity." Of course he valued the credit of success in this vast new field, but, as Webster said, his love of glory spurned everything short of general approbation; and to secure that, or retain it, was almost beyond the bounds of possibility. He saw, that in such a situation, every act would be subject to a double interpretation, while every step might in the future be used as a precedent. The ground was untrodden and dangerous. He entered upon it with apprehension and with prudent humility, but also with his native firmness and domination. He would seek the help and the views of all men, but in the end his would be the responsibility and his the mastery.

CHAPTER XVII

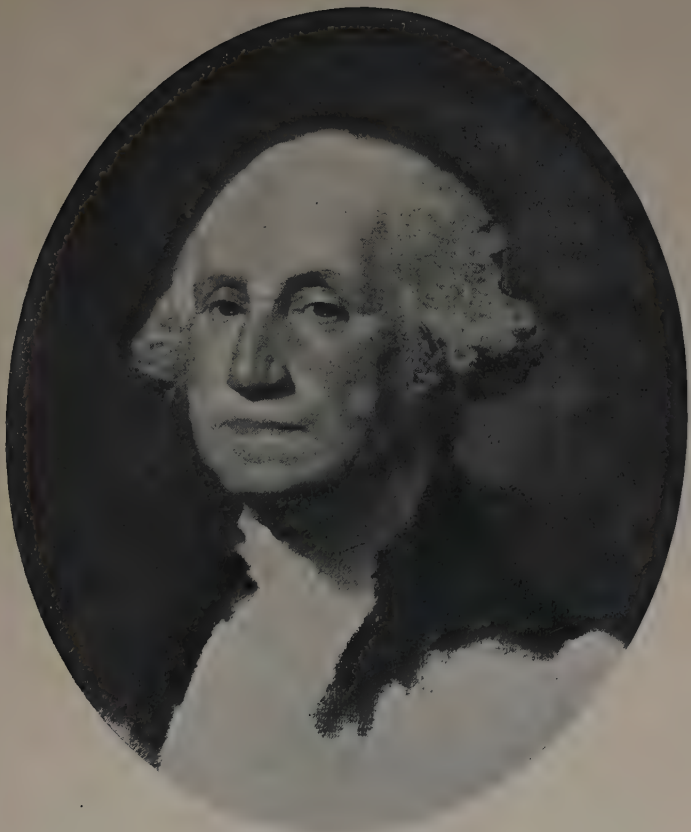
LAUNCHING THE NATION

“It was the extraordinary fortune of Washington, that, having been intrusted, in revolutionary times, with the supreme military command, and having fulfilled that trust with equal renown for wisdom and for valor, he should be placed at the head of the first government in which an attempt was to be made on a large scale to rear the fabric of social order on the basis of a written constitution and of a pure representative principle. A government was to be established, without a throne, without an aristocracy, without castes, orders or privileges; and this government, instead of being a democracy, existing and acting within the walls of a single city, was to be extended over a vast country, of different climates, interests, and habits, and of various communions of our common Christian faith.”

— DANIEL WEBSTER.

It was characteristic of Washington that one of the first matters to which he gave laborious attention was a question of form. B. Stoddert, a Secretary of the Navy, believed that “General Washington, one of the most attentive men in the world to the manner of doing things, owed a great proportion of his celebrity to this circumstance.” In those first days of the republic, with jealousy of authority on the one hand, and fear of anarchy on the other, the slightest differences of demeanor took on the deepest significance. Washington’s

friend, David Stuart, wrote to him, "I believe the great herd of mankind form their judgment of character more from such slight occurrences, than those of greater magnitude; and perhaps they are right, as the heart is more immediately consulted with respect to the former, than the latter, and an error of judgment is more easily pardoned than one of the heart." At any rate, Washington saw that manners excited fully as much passion as legislation, and they were therefore equally studied by him. He immediately consulted Madison and Jay upon the proper course to follow in making and receiving visits, with a regard partly to his time, but mainly to the effect on the public. The taste of that composite animal then tended much more toward ceremony than it does now. On a tour which Washington made in 1787, various towns received him not only with songs, praise, and bands, but even such phrases as "God bless your reign." Mr. Northley, however, a Quaker selectman, said, "Friend Washington, we are glad to see thee, and in behalf of the inhabitants bid thee a hearty welcome to Salem." There was a caricature called "The Gentry," which represented the President mounted on an ass, while his friend, the poet Humphreys, leading the Jack, chanted hosannas and birthday odes. In seeking to observe "a just medium between too much state and too great familiarity," he frequently displeased



GEORGE WASHINGTON

From a photogravure of the Stuart Portrait finished at Philadèlphia, in the spring of 1796.
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the more democratic party. Patrick Henry, asked if he would accept a senatorship, said he was too old to fall into those awkward imitations which had become fashionable. He was charged with treating the legislature in an arbitrary, fretful, and sullen manner. The opposition view is well shown in the notes of the Anti-Federalist Senator Maclay:—

“I entertain no doubt but that many people are aiming with all their force to establish a splendid Court with all the pomp of majesty. Alas! poor Washington, if you are taken in this snare! How will the gold become dim!”

“Republicans are borne down by fashion and a fear of being charged with a want of respect to General Washington. If there is treason in the wish I retract it, but would to God this same General Washington were in heaven! We would not then have him brought forward as the constant cover to every unconstitutional and irrepublican act.”

Far more unpopular were the views and manners of the Vice-President. Maclay speaks of “Bonny Johnny Adams, ever and anon mantling his visage with the most unmeaning simper that ever dimpled the face of folly.” Later, there was a rumor that whereas Washington was occasionally seen on foot, Adams, during his presidency, was never visible except with a coach and six. On the suggestion that titles be given to the officers of the government, the following passage

from a letter of the time shows the extreme statements made by the enemies of the Vice-President: "The President is supposed to have written to Mr. Adams while titles were in debate, that if any were given, he should resign. Whether it be true or not, it is a popular report." These two stories were disposed of by Washington himself: —

"One of the gentlemen, whose name is mentioned in your letter, though high-toned, has never, I believe, appeared with more than two horses in his carriage; but it is to be lamented that *he* and *some others* have stirred a question, which has given rise to so much animadversion, and which I confess has given me much uneasiness, lest it should be supposed by some, (unacquainted with facts,) that the object they had in view was not displeasing to me. The truth is, the question was moved before I arrived, without any privy or knowledge of it on my part, and urged, after I was apprized of it, contrary to my opinion; for I foresaw and predicted the reception it has met with, and the use that would be made of it by the adversaries of the government."

On this subject Madison wrote to Jefferson: —

"This, I hope, will shew to the friends of Republicanism that our new Government was not meant to substitute either monarchy or aristocracy, and that the genius of the people is as yet averse to both."

The only title that found acceptance was "Lady Washington."

The President smarted with the attacks which

were made upon his manners and his days of ceremony:—

“That I have not been able to make bows to the taste of poor Colonel Bland (who, by the by, I believe never saw one of them), is to be regretted, especially too, as (upon those occasions), they were indiscriminately bestowed, and the best I was master of, would it not have been better to throw the veil of charity over them, ascribing their stiffness to the effects of age, or to the unskillfulness of my teacher, than to pride and dignity of office, which God knows has no charms for me? For I can truly say, I had rather be at Mount Vernon with a friend or two about me, than to be attended at the seat of government by the officers of state and the representatives of every power in Europe. . . . If it is supposed that ostentation, or the fashions of courts (which, by the by, I believe originate oftener in convenience, not to say necessity, than is generally imagined), gave rise to this custom, I will boldly affirm, that no supposition was ever more erroneous; for, if I was to give indulgence to my inclinations, every moment that I could withdraw from the fatigue of my station should be spent in retirement.”

That his social demeanor made strikingly contradictory impressions on various observers was due to the fact that some saw him in his habitual gravity, others in the intervals when his spirit lightened; some when he happened to hear, some when his growing deafness oppressed and embarrassed him. At times the presence of women would relax him, and again the young girls who

thronged around him would find that his countenance never softened. Often, at table, he would play with his fork, striking it about from pure nervousness. He would frequently eat nuts for a long time in silence; again, dinner would bring out his most cheerful mood. When he was not gay, the cast of his face deepened the impression of seriousness, — the indented brow, the bluish eyes rather dull, when they were not lightened into occasional animation, the large sockets, the broad upper nose under them, — these seemed signs of a dark and smouldering temper. His friends knew what strong passions lay chained under his will, hidden by his monotonous voice, and they knew that, however silent, he was never phlegmatic. Illness, confinement, and age were beginning to tell on his appearance. With his trials and his experience of success his speech did not become more fluent. It is the outside Washington that has sunk most deeply into the heart of the average American, — the tranquil sage, rather than the passionate and fearless hero, victor over himself. The artist John Trumbull tells us that he once painted him, as he recollected the dangers of Princeton and looked the scene again, all lofty animation and high resolve. The representative from South Carolina, who had ordered the painting on behalf of Charleston, was sure that his constituents would prefer a likeness of the

man whose exterior they knew, — calm and peaceful, almost lethargic, the Washington of the popular mind.

Illness emphasized the solemnity of his manner. To his physician on one occasion he said: "Do not flatter me with vain hopes; I am not afraid to die, and therefore can hear the worst. Whether to-night, or twenty years hence, makes no difference. I know I am in the hands of a good Providence." In a letter to an old friend he wrote: "The want of regular exercise, with the cares of office, will, I have no doubt, hasten my departure for that country from whence no traveller returns; but a faithful discharge of whatsoever trust I accept, as it ever has, so it always will be, the primary consideration in every transaction of my life, be the consequences what they may." To another: "I have already had within less than a year, two severe attacks, the last worse than the first. A third more than probably will put me to sleep with my fathers. At what distance this may be I know not. Within the last twelve months I have undergone more and severer sickness than thirty preceding years afflicted me with. Put it altogether I have abundant reason, however, to be thankful that I am so well recovered." Franklin wrote to Washington to congratulate him on a recovery, and the President replied: —

"If to be venerated for benevolence, if to be admired for talents, if to be esteemed for patriotism, if to be beloved for philanthropy, can gratify the human mind, you must have the pleasing consolation to know, that you have not lived in vain. And I flatter myself that it will not be ranked among the least grateful occurrences of your life to be assured, that, so long as I retain my memory, you will be thought on with respect, veneration, and affection by your sincere friend."

When Franklin died the king and Convention of France went into mourning for the diplomat who had so fascinated them and whose adroit patriotism had cost them so much. When the House of Representatives and the Senate refused to grant this honor, Jefferson proposed to Washington that the executive should do it. Washington declined, saying, as Jefferson puts it, that "he should not know where to draw the line, if he began that ceremony. Mr. Adams was then Vice-President, and I thought General W. had his eye on him, whom he certainly did not love." Jefferson told him that the world had drawn so hard a line between himself and Dr. Franklin, on one side, and the residue of mankind, on the other, that mourning could be worn for those two, and the question still remain new and undecided for all others; but Washington, not to be led into error by flattery, refused to accept his adroit secretary's advice. His own death was so clear a possibility, in these troubled days, that Maclay,

who so often attacked him, wrote: "Called to see the President. Every eye full of tears. His life despaired of." He was very much younger than the sterling old philosopher who had just ended his varied and glorious career, but his constitution was already shattered, and he hardly expected to see many years.

Then, as now, one of the most constant plagues of a President's life was office-seekers, but Washington simplified the situation by a rule which has never been so generally followed since, that of appointing for merit. The most affecting cases left him firm. The widow of General Wooster, for instance, aroused his sympathy for the great misfortunes which had befallen her family in consequence of the war, but he pointed out to her that as a public man he could not consult his private inclinations. Whenever he did allow sympathy to influence him, it was at his own inconvenience or cost, not that of the state. With relatives he was equally firm. Jefferson later wrote, on the subject of nepotism: "Mr. Adams degraded himself infinitely by his conduct on this subject, as General Washington had done himself the greatest honor. With two such examples to proceed by, I should be doubly inexcusable to err." And during Washington's presidency, Jefferson wrote of him, "He never promises anything." At the same period Adams wrote: "No man, I believe,

has influence with the President. He seeks information from all quarters, and judges more independently than any man I ever knew." On the political side his fairness was opposed by leading Federalists. Adams later said, "Washington appointed a multitude of Democrats and Jacobins of the deepest die. I have been more cautious in this respect; but there is danger of proscribing under imputations of democracy, some of the ablest, most influential, and best characters in the Union." A Federalist wrote to Adams, "Though General Washington conferred offices on some Tories, yet they were capable, and only undeserving." His requisites were fitness and conscientiousness: "In appointing persons to office, and more especially in the judicial department, my views have been much guided to those characters who have been conspicuous in their country; not only from an impression of their services, but upon a consideration, that they had been tried, and that a readier confidence would be placed in them by the public than in others perhaps of equal merit, who had never been proved."

For considering the claims of states there was then of course a reason which does not exist now, since the permanence of the league was by no means assured. As Washington wrote to his friend, David Stuart: "Common danger brought the States into confederacy, and on their union

our safety and importance depend. A spirit of accommodation was the basis of the present constitution."

It was partly this fear of disruption, which saw danger in reckless journalism, and partly personal sensitiveness, that made him feel newspaper bitterness. "I shall be happy, in the mean time, to see a cessation of the abuses of public officers, and of those attacks upon almost every measure of government, with which some of the gazettes are so strongly impregnated; and which cannot fail, if persevered in with the malignancy with which they now teem, of rending the Union asunder. . . . In a word, if the government and the officers of it are to be the constant theme for newspaper abuse, and this too without condescending to investigate the motives or the facts, it will be impossible, I conceive, for any man living to manage the helm or to keep the machine together." But he did not always feel so keenly: "If nothing impeaching my honor or honesty is said, I care little for the rest." "From the complexion of some of our newspapers, foreigners would be led to believe, that inveterate political dissensions existed among us, and that we are on the very verge of disunion; but the fact is otherwise." The Anti-Federal newspapers and politicians devoted themselves particularly to working up a panic about a standing army. "The

Indian war is forced forward to justify our having a standing army, and eleven unfortunate men, now in Algiers, is the pretext for fitting out a fleet to go to war with them." As this subject is so frequently discussed in our day, Washington's views have a living interest. They were thus jotted down by him:—

"No man wishes less than the P—— to see a standing army established; but if Congress will not enact a proper Militia Law (not such a milk and water thing as I expect to see—if I ever see any)—Defense and the Garrisons will always require some troops—it has ever been my opinion that a select militia properly trained might supercede the necessity for these,—but I despair on that head."

Some military efficiency was made necessary by troubles among the Indians. Washington treated them with justice, but the only facts in these wars which bear strongly on his character are given with valuable completeness in a full account of how Washington took the defeat of General St. Clair's expedition, given in "Washington in Domestic Life," by Richard Rush, whose father had it from Colonel Lear:—

"Towards the close of a winter's day in 1791, an officer in uniform was seen to dismount in front of the President's in Philadelphia and, giving the bridle to his servant, knock at the door of his mansion. Learning from the porter that the President was at dinner, he said he was on public business and had dispatches for the

President. A servant was sent into the dining-room to give the information to Mr. Lear, who left the table and went into the hall where the officer repeated what he had said. Mr. Lear replied that, as the President's Secretary, he would take charge of the dispatches and deliver them at the proper time. The officer made answer that he had just arrived from the western army, and his orders were to deliver them with all promptitude, and to the President in person; but that he would wait his directions. Mr. Lear returned, and in a whisper imparted to the President what had passed. General Washington rose from the table, and went to the officer. He was back in a short time, made a word of apology for his absence, but no allusion to the cause of it. He had company that day. Everything went on as usual. Dinner over, the gentlemen passed to the drawing-room of Mrs. Washington, which was open in the evening. The General spoke courteously to every lady in the room, as was his custom. His hours were early, and by ten o'clock all the company had gone. Mrs. Washington and Mr. Lear remained. Soon Mrs. Washington left the room.

"The General now walked backward and forward slowly for some minutes without speaking. Then he sat down on a sofa by the fire, telling Mr. Lear to sit down. To this moment there had been no change in his manner since his interruption at table. Mr. Lear now perceived emotion. This rising in him, he broke out suddenly, *'It's all over — St. Clair's defeated — routed; — the officers nearly all killed, the men by wholesale; the rout complete — too shocking to think of — and a surprise into the bargain!'*

"He uttered all this with great vehemence. Then he paused, got up from the sofa and walked about the room several times, agitated but saying nothing. Near the

door he stopped short and stood still a few seconds, when his wrath became terrible.

“ ‘ Yes,’ he burst forth, ‘ *here on this very spot, I took leave of him ; I wished his success and honor ; “you have your instructions,” I said, “from the Secretary of War, I had a strict eye to them, and will add but one word — beware of a surprise. I repeat it, BEWARE OF A SURPRISE — you know how the Indians fight us.” He went off with that as my last solemn warning thrown into his ears. And yet ! ! to suffer that army to be cut to pieces, hack’d, butchered, tomahawk’d, by a surprise — the very thing I guarded him against ! O God, O God, he’s worse than a murderer ! how can he answer it to his country ! — The blood of the slain is upon him — the curse of widows and orphans — the curse of Heaven !* ’

“ This torrent came out in tones appalling. His very frame shook. It was awful, said Mr. Lear. More than once he threw his hands up as he hurled imprecations upon St. Clair. Mr. Lear remained speechless ; awed into breathless silence.

“ The roused Chief sat down on the sofa once more. He seemed conscious of his passion, and uncomfortable. He was silent. His warmth beginning to subside, he at length said in an altered voice : ‘ *This must not go beyond this room.* ’ Another pause followed — a longer one — when he said in a tone quite low, ‘ *General St. Clair shall have justice ; I looked hastily through the dispatches, saw the whole disaster but not all the particulars ; I will receive him without displeasure ; I will hear him without prejudice ; he shall have full justice.* ’

“ He was now, said Mr. Lear, perfectly calm. Half an hour had gone by. The storm was over ; and no sign of it was afterwards seen in his conduct or heard in his conversation. The result is known. The whole case was investigated by Congress. St. Clair was excul-

pated and regained the confidence Washington had in him when appointing him to that command. He had put himself in the thickest of the fight and escaped unhurt, though so ill as to be carried on a litter, and unable to mount his horse without help."

In Jefferson's "Anas" is preserved an account of a consultation about Indian affairs, in which he, Washington, Knox, and Hamilton were present. One question was whether friendly Indians, especially the Six Nations, should be invited to join the American troops. Jefferson thought it was a dishonorable policy. Hamilton said they could not be depended upon, as they were treacherous barbarians. Knox wished to employ five hundred of them. Washington, with the same views which he had expressed many years before, believed that some of them must be employed to keep them from fighting on the wrong side. It was decided not to invite them, but to tell them that if their young men could not be kept from fighting on one side or the other, the Americans would give them employment. It was while thinking about officers for the Indian War, after St. Clair's defeat, that Washington made some extremely valuable notes, to submit to his cabinet, about the best general to put at the head of the army, the main part of which appear in this volume in facsimile.

The following list contains the names of all the General Officers ^{now} living, & in this Country, as far as actual Brigadiers inclusively. - Except those who it is conjectured would not grow old, - warts of health. - & other circumstances come forward by any that could be offered to them such as ought not to be named for ^{the} important ^{the} must of Commander in Chief. -

Major General Lincoln.

Sober, honest, brave and sensible, but infirm ^{in his} just the vigor of life & reluctantly (if offered) would accept the appointment. -

May. Gen. Baron de Steuben

Sensible, sober & brave,
well acquainted with tactics, & with
great & discipline of an Army. - High in his
ideas of subordination - impatient in his
temper - ambitious - and a forerunner. - !

May. Gen. L. Montmorency.

Brave, & it is believed accomplished
tactician in his temper. Served the whole of last
War; & has been an Officer in the preceding
one, at least had been engaged in an expedition
against the Cherokee's, having defeated
them in one or two considerable actions...
- What the resources, or powers of his mind
are - how active he may be - and whether
temperate or not, are points I cannot
speak to with decision, because I have
had little or no opportunities to form
an opinion of him. -

Gen. Washington's opinion
of the public services of the
revolution since 1791

Brigadier (but by Brevet Maj General) McIntosh.
Gold and inactive; - supposed to be honest
and brave. - Not much ^{of} ~~known~~ ^{known} in the Union,
and therefore would not ~~obtain~~ ^{obtain} much
confidence or command much respect;
- either in the Community or the Army.

Maj General (by Brevet) Wayne.

More active & enterprising
than judicious & cautious. - No ac-
commodation is feared. - open to flattery and
- easily imposed upon - and liable to be
drawn into scrapes. - Too indulgent (the
effect perhaps of some of the causes just
mentioned) to his Officers & Men. - When
sober - or a little addicted to the bottle, known

May 2^d Gen. (by brevet) Weedon.

Not supposed to be an
Officer of much resource though not
deficient of a consistent share of
— rather addicted to ease & pleasure; — &
no enemy it is said to the bottle; — never
has had his name lost? forward. A. H. Co.

May 2^d Gen. (by brevet) Ward.

A sensible & judicious
Man; — his integrity unimpeached; — and
was esteemed a pretty good Officer. —
But, I recollect rightly, not a very ac-
tive one. — He has never been charged
with intemperance to my knowledge; —
His name has rarely been mentioned un-
der the present difficulty of choosing an
Officer to command, but

but this may be a great measure, too,
owing to his being at a distance. —

Major Gen^l (by brevet) Scott.

B brave, & means well; but is
an officer of inadequate abilities for ex-
tensive command; — & by report, is addic-
ted to drinking. —

Major Gen^l (by brevet) Huntington.

Sober, sensible, and
very discreet. — Has never discouraged
much enterprise; yet, wonderful has
ever been entertained of his want
of spirit, or firmness. —

Brigadier General Milkenor. - Is, by brevet, to
those whose names follow - but the
appointment to this rank was more
by honorary. and as he was but a
short time in service, little can be
said of his abilities as an Officer. -
He is lively, sensible, pompous and am-
bitious; but whether sober or not, is
unknown to me.

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Brigadier General Gist. - little has ever been said of
his qualifications as a General Officer.
His activity, & attention to duty is
somewhat doubtful, tho' his spirit, I
believe, is unimpaired. -

Brigadier General Irvine. - Is sober, tolerably
sensible.

Brigadier General Williams. - A sensible
man, but not without vanity. -
No doubt Bellevue is entertained
of his firmness - and it is thought he
does not want activity, - but it is not
easy, where there is ~~nothing~~. Nothing con-
spicuous is a character, to presence
decidedly upon a Military man who
has always acted under the immediate
orders of a Superior Officer, unless he
has been ~~very~~ frequently in action. - The
discipline, & interregency of active
of his Corp is the best evidence of the case,
and of this, in the case of Genl. Williams
I can say nothing, as he was appointed

a

a Brigadier after he left the Northern
to join the Southern Army. - But a
material objection to him is delicate
health (if there has ~~not~~ been ^{no} change
in his constitution ~~and has been~~). -
for he has gone to the West. Spring
two or three years successfully in
such bad health as to afford little
hope of his ever returning for the

Brigadier General Rufus Pittman. - Appears a
strong mind - and is a discreet man.
- No question has ever been made
(that has come to my knowledge)
of his want of firmness. - And then,
there is nothing conspicuous in
his character - and he is but little
known out of his own State, and
a narrow circle. -

Brigadier Gen^l (by brevet) Richery. — A Cleaveland
since Sept. 16th 1776; but appointed a
Brigad. by brevet at the close of
the War, only. — In this gentleman
many valuable qualities are to
be found. — He is of unquestionable
bravery. A man of strict honor,
— erudition & good sense: — And it is
said has made Tactics a study —
But what his spirit for enterprise
is: whether active or indolent; — or
fitted for arrangement, I am unable
to say. — never having had any
opportunity to form a judgment of
his

his talents as a Military character.
— The capture of Charleston put an
end to his Military services, but
his fur. Rank, and being little near
it. His part of the Union, are the two
considerations most opposed, — parti-
cularly the latter, as it is more har-
shable his being a prisoner pre-
vented his promotion, which ought
not to be any bar to his ranking
as a Brigadier, from the time that
others of his standing as a Colonel,
were promoted.

The above, and foregoing, closes the list of
all the General Officers ^{as has been premised} who, from a pe-
culiar circumstance, or peculiar circumstances,
can be brought into view; from whom the
rest, as a Minor, to name and the General, will be

If from either of the three Major Generals, which have been mentioned, - or from those who so by brevel, the Commander of the Troops should be taken, the Junior Officer can decline service on the score of Rank; although he may desire, and have expectation of being - first in Command - himself. -

Under this idea, and upon the principle of distribution, the ~~officer~~ ~~for the senior~~ ~~of the~~ ~~arrangement~~ of the Commanding Officer, and there next in grade to him, may be placed in the following points of view

Commander

Lincoln - - - or - - - Montreal.

If this be fair reasoning (and I really think it is) neither Meserve nor Williams would have ground to object ^{in byt} as it is there, than probable they will look to what is, than what ought to be, a difficulty, would be made on the subject of Rank - especially if there is any dereliction in her to the service many other character has that of commanding it - and therefore ^{it would} be ~~unexpedient~~ perhaps to look ^{for officers of that rank} ~~for officers of that rank~~ - our ~~that we~~ may come in as --- Brigadiers

Wickerson - whose rank is very questionable
Darke - or Howard
Willet - or Smith
Brooks

If for error we should be preferred to the
Command, then officers of lower grades than any
that have been mentioned, in the preceding pages,
must be sought after as ad of those are greatly his
writing, in ^{the} preceding pages, his
reason, & but little ground to hope that either ~~that~~
the Military talents which he displayed in the course
of the War, or his present dignified station, would
reconcile any of them to act a subordinate part, ex-
cept it be Wilkenson, ^{after being ordered before,} who ^{has} ^{been} ^{but a}
short time in service, & quitting it at an early per-
iod of the War, would have but little or no cause
to complain. — Ad also Pickens, who has never been
in the Continental line. — The arrangement then be
in this case. — For. See. . . . Commander.

Brigad.

Wilkenson
Pickens

Under either of these Major Generals might serve as
Brigadiers.

Mayne - - - - - helped by being a May Gen. by brevet - & teaching
 Monpas - - - - - the economy of himself. It should be correct that it
 is for one of the above & sea, 1841, - 1843 - 1844 and
 McKinnon - - - - - on Williams - on Parker

Morgan - All estimating himself. He thought accepted at it for one of the above sea 1021 - 203 - Commaad

Wilkinson

未
Dickens

*Brooks

* * * Lincoln commands, Brooks cannot be approached and if Moultrie commands the same will happen to Becker.

If Pennsylvania gives the Commanding Officer, and he is of the Rank (by brevet) of Major General, the above arrangement is equally applicable on the principle of distribution, ^{the former} as unexceptionable on the score of Rank. — But if, in ~~the former~~ ^{the present} case, Wayne, Morgan and Williams ^{separate} ~~both~~ serve, and in the second, the two last, unless it be as Commander, — then some other, put in place of Commissioner, or of inferior Rank, must

[illegible]

Adams wrote to his wife in 1796: "Yesterday I dined with the President, in company with John Watts, the King of the Cherokees, with a large number of his chiefs and their wives; among the rest the widow and children of Hanging Maw, a famous friend of ours who was basely murdered by some white people. The President dined four sets of Indians on four several days this last week." One amusing experiment of Washington's on the Indian nature was to take some Creeks, who were visiting him, to see a portrait which Trumbull was painting of him. This was the picture in which the painter sought to depict Washington as he appeared at Princeton or Trenton. His entertaining the Indians by taking them to see his portrait is an exhibition of the character which did everything he could think of to conciliate them, to secure justice for them from the grasping white speculators, and, when it was necessary, to overcome them promptly with sufficient force.

On the trend of Washington's political ideas, during these trying years, much the strongest influence was that of Alexander Hamilton who, checked and moderated by the President, conceived and executed the most important measures of the administration. Of course, Washington remains, for all that, a larger man than any of his intellectual subordinates. "No, sir," says John

Randolph, "these learned and accomplished men found their proper place under those who are fitted to command, and to command them among the rest. Such a man as Washington will say to a Jefferson, do you become my Secretary of State; to Hamilton, do you take charge of my purse, or that of the nation, which is the same thing; to Knox, do you be my master of horse." To the same effect is the judgment of Fisher Ames, that Washington's talents "were adapted to lead, without dazzling mankind; and to draw forth and employ the talents of others, without being misled by them." It is partly for that reason that "his character must be studied before it will be striking," and the more adequately it is comprehended, the more impressive will it become. "The President," according to Jefferson, "heard with calmness the opinions and reasons of each, decided the course to be pursued, and kept the government steadily in it, unaffected by the agitation. The public knew well the dissensions of the Cabinet, but never had an uneasy thought on their account, because they knew also they had provided a regulating power which would keep the machine in steady movement." Jefferson says that Washington used to take the advice of the members of his Cabinet separately, in the first two or three years of his administration, until the affairs of France and England

threatened to embroil them, which rendered more general discussion desirable. "In these discussions, Hamilton and myself were daily pitted in the cabinet like two cocks. . . . The pain was for Hamilton and myself, but the public experienced no inconvenience." Jefferson accused his rival of seeking monarchy and corrupting the legislature, and Hamilton in return charged Jefferson and Madison with heading a faction of which the views would prove dangerous to the union. "They have a womanish attachment to France, and a womanish resentment against Great Britain." He also accused Jefferson of manœuvring for the presidency, and it is true that among the greatest names in American history these two are the first who are identified with political manipulation as it has now become so familiar to us. How we look ahead and backward as we read these lines, of 1794, to an Indian chief: —

"Immortal Tamany, of Indian race,
Great in the field, and formost in the chase !
No puny saint was he, with fasting pale,
He climbed the mountain, and he swept the vale,
Rush'd thro' the torrent with unequall'd might ;
Your ancient saints would tremble at the sight. . . .
To public views he added private ends,
And loved his country most, and next his friends."

Many papers written by Hamilton and other members and supporters of the government were

attributed to Washington, who could not disavow them without weakening their influence. "When," says Pickering, "I first became acquainted with the general (in 1777), his writing was defective in grammar, and even in spelling, owing to the insufficiency of his early education; of which, however, he gradually got the better in the subsequent years of his life, by the official perusal of some excellent models, particularly those of Hamilton; and reading numerous, indeed multitudes of letters to and from his friends and correspondents. This obvious improvement was begun during the war." Jefferson, in spite of all his disappointments, pays this tribute to Washington in his "Anas," speaking of Hamilton's influence: "He was true to the Republican charge confided to him; and has solemnly and repeatedly protested to me, in our private conversations, that he would lose the last drop of his blood in support of it, and he did this the oftener, and with the more earnestness, because he knew my suspicions of Hamilton's designs against it, and wished to quiet them." At the same time Washington kept Hamilton fully informed of Jefferson's complaints and criticisms, and endeavored to make each see that the motives of his opponent might be as worthy as his own.

One of the lighter incidents of that French upheaval, which did so much to embitter political

life in America, is touched upon in these words from that pupil of Washington who was then riding the Paris whirlwind: "Give me leave, my dear General, to present you with a picture of the Bastille, just as it looked a few days after I had ordered its demolition, with the main key of the fortress of despotism. It is a tribute, which I owe as a son to my adoptive father, as an Aide-de-camp to my General, as a missionary of liberty to its patriarch." Lafayette called Washington "the Patriarch and Generalissimo of universal liberty." Thomas Paine, who sent the key for Lafayette, wrote: "That the principles of America opened the Bastille is not to be doubted; and, therefore, this key comes to the right place."

Here lovers of literary absurdity may be reminded that among the Frenchmen who visited Washington in 1791 was Chateaubriand, then a very young man, who explained to the President his plan of going to the Gulf of California, Behring Strait, Hudson Bay, Labrador, and Canada. "A project so vast," calmly announces the hero of it, "undertaken by a young man, seeming to astonish Washington, and to provoke now and then certain signs of doubt and incredulity, the young Frenchman replied emphatically, 'But it is less difficult to discover the northwest passage than to create a nation, as you have done.'"

“To this flattering reply Washington could not resist answering in English, ‘Good, very good, young man,’ and he engaged the visitor for dinner on the following day.”

Nevertheless, the grave President, whose tact and solemnity together can hardly have prevented an inner smile, did not change his mind about the project, which Chateaubriand naively says, “had none of that moderation in daring, of that instinct for the possible, which Washington had carried into his own efforts for the liberty of his country, and which was like the seal to his thoughts and to his words.”

In home affairs, which attracted Washington more than foreign complications, Hamilton was generally deemed omnipotent. Jefferson, in conversation with Van Buren, always, as the latter records, spoke not of the Federal party, but of Hamilton, as doing this or that, and when Van Buren commented on the peculiarity of the expression, Jefferson, smiling, attributed the habit to the universal conviction of the Republicans that Hamilton directed everything. Maclay, writing from New York, dated his letter “Hamiltonopolis,” and referred to the secretary as “his Holiness.” He spoke habitually of “Hamilton’s people” and “Hamilton’s clerks.” The Federalists also, except Adams and a few of his friends, looked upon Hamilton as the leader of the party.

Talleyrand told Van Buren that Hamilton was the ablest man he had met in the United States, and possibly anywhere. Gouverneur Morris, on the other hand, called him "more a theoretic than a practical man," easily excited, imaginative, vivid; but surely, if he had not proved it in a hundred other ways, the man was practical who "touched the dead corpse of the public credit, and it sprang upon its feet."

Adams wrote with probable inaccuracy of him: "He threatened his master, Washington, sometimes with pamphlets upon his character and conduct, and Washington, who had more regard to his reputation than I have, I say it with humility and mortification, might be restrained by his threats."

In obtaining his ends, Hamilton used, on a larger scale than it had ever reached before, the barter system in Congress. By allowing the permanent seat of Congress to go to the Potomac he secured in return sufficient votes to secure the assumption of state debts by the national government. Jefferson, who helped carry out this bargain, later said he had been "duped," or out-witted, by the still cleverer young leader against whom he played the expanding game of politics. Hamilton's aim was to turn the constitution into as efficient a governing machine as possible. How the Anti-Federalists felt about the document was expressed by Senator Maclay: "My mind

revolts, in many instances, against the Constitution of the United States. Indeed, I am afraid it will turn out the vilest of all traps that ever was set to ensnare the freedom of an unsuspecting people."

Such contests between the two parties, and between the two secretaries, so wearied Washington, that, tired of work, often sick, disgusted with quarrels, he longed to rest at Mount Vernon while he waited for death. He most ardently wished to escape a second term. His hearing was constantly growing worse, and he sometimes feared his other faculties might be deteriorating also. Everybody, however, urged him to continue, Republicans as well as Federalists. He told Jefferson that when he first took the presidency "he was made to believe that in two years all would be well in motion and he might retire. At the end of two years he found some things still to be done. At the end of the third year he thought it was not worth while to disturb the course of things, as in one year more his office would expire, and he was decided then to retire. And he was told there would still be danger in it. Certainly if he thought so, he would conquer his longing for retirement. But he feared it would be said his former professions of retirement had been mere affectation, and that he was like other men, when once in office, he would not quit it."

A very intelligent although possibly biassed view was given by Hamilton, in July, 1792:—

“I received the most sincere pleasure at finding in our late conversation, that there was some relaxation in the disposition you had before discovered to decline a re-election. Since your departure, I have left no opportunity of sounding the opinions of persons, whose opinions were worth knowing, on these two points: 1st. The effect of your declining upon the public affairs, and upon your own reputation. 2dly. The effect of your continuing, in reference to the declarations you have made of your disinclination to public life; and I can truly say that I have not found the least difference of sentiment, on either point. The impression is uniform that your declining would be to be deplored as the greatest evil that could befall the country at the present juncture, and as critically hazardous to your own reputation—that your continuance will be justified in the mind of every friend to his country, by the evident necessity of it. 'Tis clear, says every one with whom I have conversed, that the affairs of the national government are not yet firmly established—that its enemies, generally speaking, are as inveterate as ever—that their enmity has been sharpened by its success, and by all the resentments which flow from disappointed predictions and mortified vanity—that a general and strenuous effort is making in every State, to place the administration of it in the hands of its enemies, as if they were its safest guardians—that the period of the next House of Representatives is likely to prove the crisis of its permanent character—that if you continue in office, nothing materially mischievous is to be apprehended—if you quit, much is to be dreaded—that the same motives which induced you to accept originally

ought to decide you to continue till matters have assumed a more determined aspect — that indeed it would have been better, as it regards your own character, that you had never consented to come forward, than now to leave the business unfinished and in danger of being undone — that in the event of storms arising, there would be an imputation either of want of foresight or want of firmness — and in fine, that on public and personal accounts, on patriotic and prudential considerations, the clear path to be pursued by you will be, again to obey the voice of your country's which it is not doubted will be as earnest and as unanimous as ever."

Madison has recorded a conversation which he had with Washington on May 5th, 1792, in which Washington said that "what he desired was, to prefer that mode which would be most remote from the appearance of arrogantly presuming on his reëlection in case he should not withdraw himself, and such a time as would be most convenient to the public in making the choice of his successor." Madison thought that his retirement might have effects which ought not to be hazarded. The President replied that he could not see that he was necessary to the successful administration of the government; "that on the contrary, he had from the beginning found himself deficient in many of the essential qualifications, owing to his inexperience in the forms of public business, his unfitness to judge of legal questions, and questions arising out of the Con-

stitution; that others more conversant in such matters would be better able to execute the trust; that he found himself, also, in the decline of life, his health becoming sensibly more infirm, and perhaps his faculties also; that the fatigues and disagreeableness of his situation were in fact scarcely tolerable to him; that he only uttered his real sentiments when he declared that his intention would lead him rather to go to his farm, take his spade in his hand, and work for his bread, than remain in his present situation; that it was evident, moreover, that a spirit of party in the Government was becoming a fresh source of difficulty, and he was afraid was dividing some [alluding to the Secretary of State and the Secretary of the Treasury] more particularly connected with him in the administration; that there were discontents among the people which were also shewing themselves more and more, and that although the various attacks against public men and measures had not in general been pointed at him, yet, in some instances, it had been visible that he was the indirect object, and it was probable the evidence would grow stronger and stronger that his return to private life was consistent with every public consideration, and, consequently, that he was justified in giving way to his inclination for it."

Madison argued that a continuance of temperate government was the best way to allow both

the enemies of the present government system and the enemies of republican government to lose their influence. Jefferson as a presidential candidate would incur certain Southern prejudices. Adams was in favor of monarchy openly and Jay secretly. "Without appearing to be any wise satisfied with what I had urged, he turned the conversation to other subjects." However, the general voice was too strong for him, and he sadly consented to accept a second term, hardly expecting that his life would last through the period of labor and give him a final taste of rural happiness. Never had the voice of duty sounded harder, but now, as always, there was for him no other course than to obey.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE SECOND ADMINISTRATION

“All his measures were right in their intent.” — WEBSTER.

It was on August 2d, 1793, soon after the beginning of his second administration, that Washington, according to Jefferson's report, exclaimed that, “by God, he would rather be in his grave than in his present situation.” Although he had been unanimously reëlected, he took no pleasure in the prospect of continued work. His tone was growing always graver. After describing his feelings on reëlection, he mentioned the death of an acquaintance, and added, “We shall all follow; some sooner and some later.” A week after, he wrote to a relative:—“But the will of heaven is not to be controverted or scrutinized by the children of this world. It therefore becometh the creatures of it to submit to the will of the Creator, whether it be to prolong or to shorten the number of our days, to bless them with health, or afflict them with pain.” William Sullivan, who during this second administration had repeated opportunities of seeing Washington,

said, "His deportment was invariably grave; it was sobriety that stopped short of sadness." To Gouverneur Morris Washington wrote during this term: — "I have nothing to ask; and, discharging my duty, I have nothing to fear from invective. The acts of my administration will appear when I am no more, and the intelligent and candid part of mankind will not condemn my conduct without recurring to them." To Edmund Pendleton, on January 22d, 1795, "A month from this day, if I should live to see the completion of it, will place me on the wrong (perhaps it would be better to say on the advanced) side of my grand climacteric."

Nevertheless, there was some pleasure in life for the aging and melancholy soldier, even borne down by labor and deprived of his farm, and a hint of some hours not without happiness or at least consolation may be found in these sentences from John Adams to his wife: —

"Mrs. Washington told me a story on Tuesday, before a number of gentlemen, so ineffably ridiculous that I dare not repeat it in writing. The venerable lady laughed as immoderately as all the rest of us did."

"Dr. Priestly is here. I drank tea with him at the President's on Thursday evening. He says he always maintained against Dr. Price, that old age was the pleasantest part of life, and he finds it so. I think so too."

To have talked with such men as Priestly, the philosophic friend of Dr. Franklin, must have been one of the solidest pleasures of Washington's over-burdened life. Many of his old friends were drifting away. Public matters were rapidly alienating many of them, which was always a source of keen pain to so sensitive a man as Washington, and there were also more personal disagreements, one of them leading to the well-known violent abuse from Tom Paine, who was not made more amiable by his habitual drunkenness. Jefferson wrote to Madison about Washington: "He is also extremely affected by the attacks made and kept up on him in the public papers. I think he feels these things more than any person I ever met with." On the other hand, some of his friends still cheered him. "The different parties," wrote Gouverneur Morris from Paris, "pass away like the shadows in a magic lantern, and to be well with any one of them, would, in a short period, become the cause of unquenchable hatred with the others. Happy, happy America, governed by reason, by law, by the man whom she loves, whom she almost adores! It is the pride of my life to consider that man as my friend, and I hope long to be honored with that title. God bless you, my dear sir, and keep and preserve you."

Among those public conditions which tended

to separate him from some of his best friends none did so much (not even Hamilton's centralization measures) as the conflict of feelings about foreign affairs; love of France, on the one hand, and suspicion of her, on the other, reaching fever heat and scorching from both sides the man who stood between. His view of our foreign relations, which created storms while he lived, has often been used as a gospel since his death. To a peer of Great Britain Washington wrote: "I believe it is the sincere wish of United America to have nothing to do with the political intrigues, or the squabbles, of European nations; but, on the contrary, to exchange commodities and live in peace and amity with all the inhabitants of the earth. . . . Under such a system, if we are allowed to pursue it, the agricultural and mechanical arts, the wealth and population of these States, will increase with that degree of rapidity as to baffle all calculation, and must surpass any idea your Lordship can hitherto have entertained on the occasion." To Patrick Henry he wrote that he wished to see the United States: "Independent of *all* and under the influence of *none*. In a word, I want an *American* character, that the powers of Europe may be convinced we act for *ourselves*, and not for *others*. This, in my judgment, is the only way to be respected abroad and happy at home; and not, by becoming the parti-

sans of Great Britian or France, create dissensions, disturb the public tranquility, and destroy, perhaps for ever, the cement which binds the union." Again, to Timothy Pickering, who had become his secretary of state. "Do justice to all, and never forget that we are Americans, the remembrance of which will convince us that we ought not to be French or English."

Of course these principles were laid down with a view not to the future but to the situation in which the young nation then was, as shown by these words to James Monroe:

"If this country could, consistently with its engagements, maintain a strict neutrality and thereby preserve peace, it was bound to do so by motives of policy, interest, and every other consideration, that ought to actuate a people situated and circumstanced as we are, already deeply in debt, and in a convalescent state from the struggle we have been engaged in ourselves."

It is only fair also to remember these words to Congress:—

"The United States ought not to indulge a persuasion, that, contrary to the order of human events, they will for ever keep at a distance those painful appeals to arms, with which the history of every other nation abounds. There is a rank due to the United States among nations, which will be withheld, if not absolutely lost, by the reputation of weakness. If we desire to avoid insult, we must be able to repel it; if we desire to

secure peace, one of the most powerful instruments of our rising prosperity, it must be known, that we are at all times ready for war."

The degree to which he considered the temporary weakness of the country comes out again in these lines to Gouverneur Morris : —

"Nothing short of self-respect, and that justice which is essential to a national character, ought to involve us in war ; for sure I am, if this country is preserved in tranquillity twenty years longer, it may bid defiance in a just cause to any power whatever ; such in that time will be its population, wealth, and resources."

This broad, patriotic, and tolerant attitude in foreign affairs has won Washington equal credit at home and abroad. John Adams wrote to his wife in 1794 : "Nearly one half of the continent is in constant opposition to the other, and the President's situation, which is highly responsible, is very distressing. He made me a very friendly visit yesterday, which I returned to-day. . . . His earnest desire to do right and his close application to discover it, his deliberate and comprehensive view of our affairs with all the world, appeared in a very amiable and respectable light." Lord Brougham has said : "Nor was there ever among all the complacent self-delusions with which the fond conceits of national vanity are apt to intoxicate us, one more utterly fantastical than

the notion wherewith the politicians of the Pitt school were wont to flatter themselves and beguile their followers, that simply because the Great American would not yield either to the bravadoes of the Republican envoy, or the fierce democracy of Jefferson, he therefore had become weary of republics, and a friend to monarchy and to England."

The adherents of France were much more violent than those of England, and there is much truth, though some exaggeration in the picturesque description which Adams wrote to Jefferson: "You certainly never felt the terrorism excited by Genêt, in 1793, when ten thousand people in the streets of Philadelphia day after day threatened to drag Washington out of his house, and effect a revolution in the government, or compel it to declare war in favor of the French revolution and against England. The coolest and the firmest minds, even among the Quakers in Philadelphia, have given their opinions to me; that nothing but the yellow fever, which removed Dr. Hutchinson and Jonathan Dickinson Sergeant from this world, could have saved the United States from a fatal revolution of government." Hostile demonstrations of course had no effect on Washington, and, finding Genêt unbearably troublesome in his efforts to stir up trouble, he had him recalled by the French government.

Attacks on the President were also frequent and virulent on account of his effort to settle questions which had remained in dispute under the treaty of 1783 between Great Britain and the United States. When a mission to England became necessary after the war, Washington thought of Hamilton as envoy extraordinary; but the opposition to him was strong, and Hamilton himself recommended Jay, who was chosen. The treaty which he signed gave great dissatisfaction in America. Some opposed it because they thought the British had the best of it, others because it might give offence to France. Monroe speaks of binding "the aristocracy of this country stronger and closer to that of the other," and treats Hamilton and Jay as if their deepest love were for Great Britain. Washington, like many of his wisest advisers, did not like the treaty, but he wished peace. Although the trade regulations were much against the United States, the promise by Great Britain to surrender the western posts which she had held, and thus closed the great western country against free development, and the feeling that peace was established, were looked upon by the Federalists generally as more important than anything else. John Adams thought the President should never have hesitated. Washington asked many opinions. To Hamilton he wrote:—

“It is not the opinion of *those* who were determined (before it was promulgated) to *support* or *oppose* it, that I am solicitous to obtain; for *these* I well know rarely do more than examine the side to which they lean; without giving the reverse the consideration it deserves; — possibly without a wish to be apprised of the reasons on which the objections are founded. — My desire is to learn from dispassionate men who have a knowledge of the subject, and abilities to judge of it, the genuine opinion they entertain of *each* article of the instrument; and the *result* of it in the aggregate.”

This might well remind us of Lowell's lines about Washington: —

“His was the impartial vision of the great
Who see not as they wish, but as they find.”

Copies of the treaty were burned in the streets and Jay was several times hanged in effigy. The feeling for war with Great Britain was strong in the House of Representatives. The public demonstrations were taken by Washington at their true worth. “It is very desirable,” he wrote to Hamilton, “to ascertain, if possible, after the paroxysm of the fever is a little abated, what the real temper of the people is concerning it; for at present the cry against the Treaty is like that against a mad dog; and every one, in a manner, seems engaged in running it down.” He thought what was happening, however, important enough to make him cut short a rest at Mount Vernon. “I am excited to this resolution by the violent

and extraordinary proceedings, which have and are about taking place in the northern parts of the Union, and may be expected in the southern." Some of the disturbances were thus described by Pickering to John Quincy Adams:—

"The New York meeting was numerous and tumultuous. Colonel Hamilton presented himself to support the treaty. For the noise of the multitude he could not be heard, and the throwing of stones endangered his life. . . .

"Philadelphia followed next. At the adjourned meeting I was present to see their proceedings and judge of their numbers. The whole assembly did not exceed fifteen hundred, of whom a full half were Frenchmen and other spectators."

There was some doubt about the advisability of the President's addressing Congress, when it met, on the subject of the treaty. Jay wrote to Pickering:—

"It appears to me to be a good *general* rule that the President should very rarely come forward, except officially. A degree of reserve seems requisite to the preservation of his dignity and authority. Any address would be exposed to indecent strictures. . . . A more early address, by correcting public opinion, would render it a check on some Representatives, who might otherwise favor the opposition. . . . In a word, there are *pros* and *cons* about the address; but it is a point on which I should confide in the President's judgment, which very seldom errs."

Washington did not make the address, but when the treaty came to him from the Senate, he ratified it, though not without serious doubts. It was ratified in England and returned, whereupon Washington promulgated it by a proclamation, without consulting the House of Representatives, whose duty it was to make appropriations for carrying it into effect. The House thereupon called upon the President for the documents concerning the negotiations about the treaty. Washington flatly refused. Madison wrote to Jefferson, "The absolute refusal was as unexpected as the tone and tenor of the message are improper and indelicate." Chief Justice Marshall said of Washington's answer, "The terms, in which this decided, and as it would seem, unexpected negative to the call for papers was conveyed, appeared to break the last chord of that attachment which had hitherto bound some of the active leaders of the opposition to the person of the President." Jefferson thought that, taken with the opposition of the Republicans to the treaty, the support of the Federalists "had made him all their own." The same brilliant Democrat wrote, "It would give you a fever were I to name to you the apostates who have gone over to these heresies, men who were Samsons in the field and Solomons in the council, but who have had their heads shorn by the harlot England." In the *National Gazette*

of Philadelphia, edited by Philip Freneau, and supported by friends of Jefferson and Madison, appeared a parody of the Athanasian creed, containing the following:—

“Whoever would live peaceably in Philadelphia, above all things it is necessary that he hold the Federal faith is this, that there are two governing powers in this country, both equal, and yet one superior: which faith except one keep undefiledly, without doubt he shall be abused everlastingly.

“The Briton is superior to the American, and the American is inferior to the Briton; and yet they are equal, and the Briton shall govern the American. . . .

“For like as we are compelled by the British Constitution book to acknowledge that *subjects* must submit themselves to their monarchs, and be obedient to them in all things;

“So we are forbid by our Federal executive to say that we are at all influenced by our treaty with France, or to pay regard to what it enforceth.”

Madison wrote to Monroe, on February 26th, 1796: “The birthday of the President has been celebrated with greater splendour than ever. The crisis explains the policy. A circumstance has taken place, however, more indicative in its nature than any display within the fashionable circle. You will recollect the usage of adjourning for half an hour to compliment the President on the anniversary of his birth. Last year there were but thirteen dissentients; this year, the motion

to adjourn was negatived by fifty against thirty-eight." The same leader had shortly before written in his "Political Observations": "Will it be more than truth to say, that this great and venerable name is too often assumed for what cannot recommend itself, and for what there is neither proof nor probability that its sanction can be obtained? Do arguments fail? Is the public mind to be encountered? There are not a few ever ready to invoke the name of Washington." A Massachusetts physician, brother to Fisher Ames, exclaimed in his diary: "Washington now defies the whole Sovereign that made him what he is—and can unmake him again. Better his hand had been cut off when his glory was at its height before he blasted all his Laurels. . . . Federal Government become near as arbitrary as any European, the worst Tories & Conspirators with England caressed."

This difficult political settlement, which cost Washington so many public supporters, and showed his willingness to use every scrap of the President's power in an emergency, alienated one of his closest personal friends. Edmund Randolph, who had become Secretary of State, went far in his intrigues in favor of France. The proof of his improper behavior first reached his fellow Secretaries, Timothy Pickering and Roger Wolcott, who requested the President specially

to come to Philadelphia. When Washington arrived there he sent for Pickering, who found the President at table with Randolph.

"Very soon," says Pickering, "after taking a glass of wine, the President rose, giving me a wink. I rose and followed him into another room. 'What,' said he, 'is the cause of your writing me such a letter?' 'That man,' said I, 'in the other room (pointing toward that in which we had left Randolph), 'is a traitor.'"
He then told Washington the substance of the damaging letter which had been discovered.

"Let us return to the other room," said the President, "to prevent any suspicion of the cause of our withdrawing."

Washington soon met his Cabinet as usual, the Secretary of State being present. No reference was made to the letter from the French minister, which was the document showing that Randolph had charged the American government with using bribery to secure the adoption of the British treaty. At this Cabinet meeting Randolph strenuously opposed the ratification of the treaty, and urged further postponement. In conclusion, the President said, "I will ratify the treaty," which he did. A rupture with the Secretary of State, before the treaty was finally ratified would, in Pickering's opinion, have endangered the public interests. Of the silence

which the President deemed it wise to preserve, Randolph, after the breach, wrote to Washington:—

“At all hours of the day I was ready to obey your summons. On every day, except Sunday, and perhaps twice a day, I had a private interview with you. Twice I spoke to you of the warmth which Messrs. Wolcott and Pickering had discovered on the 12th in the discussion of the treaty in your room, and which undoubtedly, as it now appears, sprang from a knowledge of that letter. On the 14th you veiled the meditated stroke by a visit at my house. On the 15th you invited me in the most cordial way to dine with a party of chosen friends, and placed me at the foot of your table. On the 16th the same air of hospitality was assumed. Mr. Wolcott had been privy to the letter at least from the 28th of July, and the President of the United States from the 11th of August, and yet he had buried it at the bottom of his soul, until the 19th of August, when the final catastrophe seemed to be secure.”

Randolph naturally charged that Hamilton, the universal scapegoat, was at the bottom of the trouble.

On the 19th Washington, before a Cabinet meeting,¹ asked the Secretaries, Pickering, Bradford, and Wolcott, to watch Randolph's countenance while he read the damaging despatch. “The President fixed his own eye upon him;

¹ The most important account of these incidents, except Randolph's own, is in the life of Pickering, which I mainly follow.

and I never before, or afterward, saw it look so animated."

It was after the regular business that Washington drew from his pocket the letter of the French minister, Fauchet, handed it to Randolph, in the presence of the other Secretaries, and stated that there were matters in it which called for explanation. Randolph read it through, expressed a wish to examine it further, withdrew, and instantly sent in his resignation.

Randolph published a "vindication," which injured him and left Washington's position as strong as ever. In Jefferson's copy the following passages, aimed at the President, were underscored: "A temper which under the exterior of cool and slow deliberation rapidly catches a prejudice, and with difficulty abandons it." "Your invincible repugnance to retract."

From the life of Pickering I take the only full account of how Washington received this attack, — an account which is highly colored, perhaps, but probably in substance accurate, and at any rate alive as few authentic anecdotes of Washington are: —

"It reached his hand soon after its issue. He read it through, and immediately sent for Colonel Pickering. Receiving him with his usual composure of manner, and requesting him to be seated, he spoke as follows, in a slow and sup-

pressed voice, uttering each word with deliberation, and pausing between the sentences: —

“Colonel Pickering, I feel that a necessity is upon me to unburden my mind to some one, and you will pardon me for the liberty I have taken in sending for you on this occasion.

“Peyton Randolph was my dearest friend. He died suddenly, in October, 1775. In an hour of affectionate and solemn communion, in which he had expressed an expectation that before long he would thus be removed, he begged me to be a friend to his nephew and adopted son Edmund. I promised that I would be to him as a father: that promise has been sacredly kept. If, in any instance, I have been swayed by personal and private feelings, in the exercise of political influence or of official patronage and power, it has been in this.’

“Thus far there had been no change in his countenance or manner, except a slight indication of increasing sensibility when uttering the last two or three sentences. He proceeded, with somewhat longer pauses and a more compressed and restrained expression: —

“Upon taking command of the army of the United Colonies, in June, 1775, I made him, then not twenty-two years of age, one of my Aids; as such he was a member of my military family. My entire interest was actively given to place

and advance him in the path of political and professional promotion, for which his talents and education remarkably qualified him. By the aid of my influence he rose from one distinguished post to another in rapid succession, and at an early age, in the civil service of Virginia; a member of the Convention that framed the first Constitution of that State, in 1776; in the same year Attorney-General of Virginia,—an office his Uncle Peyton, as well as his father and grandfather, had held; a delegate to Congress in 1779; Governor of Virginia in 1786; and a member of the Convention that framed the Constitution of the United States. I made him Attorney-General of the States, at the organization of the Federal government; a member of my cabinet from the first. In 1794 I made him Secretary of State, placing him at the head of my official council; in my cabinet, from the beginning, he has been admitted to my utmost confidence. I have held with him a daily intimacy. He occupied the chief seat among the guests at my table.'

"At this point Washington rose to his feet,—the pamphlet in his hand,—his whole aspect and manner showing the storm that was gathering, and his voice rising as he spoke:—

"While at the head of my cabinet he has been secretly, but actively, plotting with the opponents of my administration, consulting and contriving

with them for the defeat of its measures; he, the Secretary of State, to whose trust the foreign relations of the country are confided, has been conducting an intrigue with the ambassador of a foreign government, to promote the designs of that government, which were to overthrow the administration of which he, Randolph, was a trusted member, receiving from that ambassador money to aid in accomplishing that object; soliciting from him more for the same purpose,—all this time I have had entire faith in him, and been led by that faith to pay deference to his representations, to delay the ratification of the British treaty, thereby exposing myself to the imputation of having been intimidated by party clamor from the discharge of a public duty, an imputation contrary to the truth, a thought abhorrent to my feelings and to my nature, and now he has written and published this.’

“As he uttered these last words, he threw the pamphlet down, and gave way to a terrific burst of denunciation in unrestrained expressions. He then calmly resumed his seat. The storm was over. With perfect serenity other business was entered upon, and the name or thought of Edmund Randolph was never again suffered to disturb his temper.”

Immediately after the publication of the pamphlet Washington asked Hamilton what ought

to be done about it, and his adviser answered: "His attempts against you are viewed by all whom I have seen, as base. They will certainly fail of their aim, and will do good, rather than harm, to the public cause and to yourself. It appears to me that, by you, no notice can be, or ought to be taken of the publication. It contains its own antidote."

Before his death Randolph wrote to a nephew of Washington thus: "If I could now present myself before your venerated uncle, it would be my pride to confess my contrition, that I suffered my irritation, let the cause be what it might, to use some of those expressions respecting him, which, at this moment of my indifference to the ideas of the world, I wish to recall, as being inconsistent with my subsequent conviction."

It was too great sympathy with France, also, and the Revolution, which led to the recall of Monroe, who was minister there. Monroe published a "Short View" of the controversy between him and the President, which merely shows how strong Washington's judgment was. On his own copy Washington made many caustic observations, the tone of which is indicated by the page reproduced in this volume.

In January 1796, Mr. Randolph's pamphlet was received in Paris, which contained several of the President's letters, in some of which the French republic was spoken of in terms by no means respectful, and the friends of the French revolution in the United States reproached with being the friends "of war and confusion;" and shortly after this, was received also, the President's address to congress, upon the opening of the session, which in treating of the flourishing condition of the United States, contrasted it with the miserable, famished, and disorganized state of other powers. Much too was said in that address of the advantage of our accommodation with Britain, as likewise of the favourable disposition of that power towards us, without the slightest attention being shewn to the French republic; unless indeed it was referred to in the picture of distress above noticed, as was inferred by the French government, as I understood from good authority, at the time. (2)

(1) To state facts
for the information
of Congress
and not to
express an
opinion on
the conduct
of the President
in the
exercise of his
duties. — If
the President
should ever
take the Chair
of Government
he may find
it is his duty
to be as
impartial as
possible. But the
President
is not a
Speaker.

(2) If the
President
did not
feel
it his
duty
to
publish
the
facts
of
the
French
revolution
in
the
United
States
why
publish
the
facts
of
the
French
revolution
in
the
United
States?

(3) But has
our
suffering
Commence
any
Compos
ition? and
why
was
not
this
urg'd
with
firmness,
agreeable
to
his
Instruction?

(4) What
! declare
to
the
world
that
we
were
going
to
break
with
this
and
that
Nation,
and
that
peace
was
to
be
restored
— Is
this
in
the
course
of
the
President's
duties?

(5) In what respect counteracted?

(6) That is not
doubled, but
for what
purpose
was
this
excited?

X
Could
this
be
done
and
it
not
be
done?

Randolph's pamphlet charged Washington with being a victim to party spirit. So far was that allegation from the truth that the President even offered a Cabinet position to Patrick Henry, a deed which led one leader of the opposition to write to another, — Madison to Jefferson, "The offer of the Secretaryship of State to P. Henry is a circumstance which I should not have believed, without the most unquestionable testimony." In choosing men for high office Washington decided in complete independence, although his fullest information came, as usual, from Alexander Hamilton.

The tax on distilled liquors, one of Hamilton's measures, had produced the Whiskey Rebellion, in 1794. So violent was the demonstration, encouraged by the societies of the opposition party, called Democratic Societies, against paying the tax, that Washington himself went to put down the insurrection, a step which one violent anti-administrative journalist argued was unconstitutional, as Congress was in session. Washington used strong language about these societies, which led Madison to write to Monroe: "You will readily understand the business detailed in the newspapers relating to the denunciation of the 'self-created Societies.' The introduction of it by the President was, perhaps, the greatest error of his political life." Jefferson was much more severe about what

he called an attack on the freedom of discussion. Certainly the President's words lacked moderation. This upheaval was, of course, charged up to Hamilton. "The servile copyist of Mr. Pitt," wrote Jefferson to Monroe, "thought he too must have his alarms, his insurrections and plots against the Constitution. Hence the incredible fact that the freedom of association, of conversation, and of the press, should in the 5th year of our government have been attacked under the form of a denunciation of the democratic societies, a measure which even England, as boldly as she is advancing to the establishment of an absolute monarchy, has not yet been bold enough to attempt. Hence too the example of employing military force for civil purposes, when it has been impossible to produce a single fact of insurrection, unless that term be entirely confounded with occasional riots, and when the ordinary process of law had been resisted indeed in a few special cases, but by no means generally, nor had its effect been duly tried. But it answered the favorite purposes of strengthening government and increasing the public debt." The insurgents melted away on the approach of the troops. Washington, narrating the result to Congress, said: "It has demonstrated, that our prosperity rests on solid foundations; by furnishing an additional proof, that my fellow-citizens understand the true

principles of government and liberty; that they feel their inseparable union." These last two words are interesting in the light of one of Daniel Webster's weightiest phrases.

His public troubles, and his never flagging love of rural life, made Washington firm in his determination to retire at the end of his second term. This was a purely personal decision. He believed, as we have seen, in three terms, or more, if the circumstances called for them. He deemed the fear of autocracy, in a government like ours, an un-mixed absurdity. It was only that he felt his powers flagging, and that the struggle of public life distressed him more and more. Of course there were a great number who urged him to remain. Jay wrote: "Attachment to you, as well as to my country, urges me to hope and to pray, that you will not leave the work unfinished. Remain with us at least while the storm lasts, and until you can retire like the sun in a calm, unclouded evening. May every blessing here and hereafter attend you." The idea seems to have prevailed somewhat in Great Britain that whenever Washington was removed the federal union would dissolve and disorder ensue. King wrote from London to Hamilton: "Nothing can exceed the applause that is here given to our government, and no American who has not been in England can have a just idea of the admiration

expressed among all parties for General Washington. It is a common observation, that he is not only the most illustrious, but also the most meritorious character that has hitherto appeared." Jefferson wrote to a correspondent in January, '97: "Such is the popularity of the President that the people will support him in whatever he will do or will not do, without appealing to their own reason or to anything but their own feelings toward him. His mind has so long been used to unlimited applause that it could not brook contradiction, or even advice offered unasked. To advice, when asked, he is very open. I have long thought therefore it was best for the republican interest to soothe him by flattering where they could approve his measures, and to be silent where they disapprove, that they may not render him desperate as to their affections, and entirely indifferent to their wishes, in short to lie on their oars while he remains at the helm, and let the bark drift as his will and a superintending providence shall direct." A few days later he wrote to Madison: "It was impossible the bank and paper mania should not produce great and extensive ruin. The President is fortunate to get off just as the bubble is bursting, leaving others to hold the bag. Yet, as his departure will mark the moment when the difficulties begin to work, you will see, that they will be ascribed to the new

administration, and that he will have his usual good fortune of reaping credit from the good acts of others and leaving to them that of his errors."

Some of John Adams's letters to his wife give glimpses into Washington's feelings:—

9th. *April* /96. "The old hero looks very grave of late."

30 *Dec.* 96. "The President says he must sell something to enable him to clear out. . . . The President is now engaged in his speculations upon a vault which he intends to build for himself, not to sleep but to lie down in."

15 *Feb.* /96. "After twenty years of such service with such success, and with no obligation to any one, I would retire, before my constitution failed, before my memory failed, before I should grow peevish and fretful, irresolute or improvident. I would no longer put at hazard a character so dearly earned, at present so uncontaminated, but liable by the weakness of age to be impaired in a moment. He has, in the most solemn manner, sworn before many witnesses at various times and on several occasions, and it is now, by all who are in the secret, considered as irrevocable as the laws of Medes and Persians."

Washington's feeling of responsibility for the future of his country led to the careful preparation of his Farewell Address, the composition of which was the most notable, perhaps, of all the personal services executed by Hamilton for his friend. The ideas were Washington's, chosen

from his own mind and the minds of Hamilton, Jay, Madison, and others, but the draft in its final form was the work of Hamilton, and it is written with a literary vigor quite beyond the reach of Washington himself. In May, 1796, the President wrote to Hamilton: "Even if you should think it best to throw the *whole* into a different form, let me request, notwithstanding, that my draught may be returned to me (along with yours) with such amendments and corrections as to render it as perfect as the formation is susceptible of; curtailed if too verbose; and relieved of all tautology not necessary to enforce the ideas in the original or quoted part. My wish is that the whole may appear in a plain style, and be handed to the public in an honest, unaffected, simple, part." Hamilton chose to write a new draft, and in doing so he produced the most famous and the most influential piece of advice in the history of our country. The credit is properly given to Washington by the world, for the experience was his, the solution his, Hamilton his; and it is only among the educated few that the dashing lieutenant receives his meed of praise. From that great work and important suggestions Hamilton ranged down to such minute advice as this, given as late as November, 1796: "The true rule on this point would be to receive the Minister at your levees with a *dignified reserve*, holding an *exact medium*

between an *offensive coldness* and *cordiality*. The point is a nice one to be hit, but no one will know better how to do it than the President."

Hamilton, in sending Washington the paper, wrote: "I have the pleasure to send you herewith a certain draft, which I have endeavored to make as perfect as my time and engagements would permit. It has been my object to render this act importantly and lastingly useful, and avoiding all just cause of present exception, to embrace such reflections and sentiments as will wear well, progress in approbation with time, and redound to future reputation. How far I have succeeded you will judge." How well he succeeded, we know. Washington in his reply said, "The sentiments therein contained, are extremely just, and such as ought to be inculcated." A little later he wrote Hamilton: "I have given the paper herewith enclosed several serious and attentive readings, and prefer it greatly to the other draughts, being more copious on material points, more dignified on the whole, and with less egotism; of course, less exposed to criticism, and better calculated to meet the eye of discerning readers (foreigners particularly, whose curiosity I have little doubt will lead them to inspect it attentively, and to pronounce their opinions on the performance)." He made suggestions in the margin, part of which Hamilton acted upon in a

revised draft, and part of which he thought out of place. Of the whole document Hamilton said, "Had I health enough, it was my intention to have written it over, in which case I would both have improved and abridged." This is the paper of which the "venerable gentleman" in "The Professor at the Breakfast Table," remarked, "Nothing better than that since the last chapter in Revelation. Five-and-forty years ago there used to be Washington societies, and little boys used to walk in processions, each little boy having a copy of the Address bound in red, hung round his neck by a ribbon."

The paper prepared, Washington's carefully planned legacy to posterity, he was ready to lay down the power, civil and military, which had been his for almost a quarter of a century. He had outlived the day when the voice in his favor was practically unanimous. He wrote to Hamilton of his "disinclination to be longer buffeted in the public prints by a set of infamous Scribblers," but he had the good judgment to strike out of the Farewell Address a fierce attack on the said scribblers. A few days before his retirement the *Aurora* said: "If ever a nation was debauched by a man, the American nation has been debauched by Washington; if ever a nation was deceived by a man, the American nation has been deceived by Washington." When he gave up office,

an anonymous correspondent of the *Aurora* wrote:—

“ . . . The man who is the Source of all the misfortunes of our country is this day reduced to a level with his fellow-citizens, and is no longer possessed of power to multiply evils upon the United States. . . . Every heart in unison with the freedom and happiness of the people ought to beat high with exultation that the name of Washington from this day ceases to give a currency to political iniquity and legalized corruption. A new era is now opening upon us—an era which promises much to the people, for public measures must now stand upon their own merits, and nefarious profits can no longer be supported by a name. When a retrospect is taken of the Washington administration for eight years, it is a subject of the greatest astonishment that a single individual should have conquered the principles of republicanism in an enlightened people just emerged from the gulf of despotism, and should have carried his designs against the public liberty so far as to have put in jeopardy its very existence.”

For this article the publisher received a beating, and found it necessary to disavow responsibility. The state legislatures, with one or two exceptions, responded cordially to the address. The change, however, in his position in the nation, was shown by the action of Virginia, which expressed respect and regret, but when his friends in the House of Delegates endeavored to ascribe to him “wisdom in the cabinet, valor in the field, and the purest patriotism in both,” the

amendment was lost, 74 to 69. Of Washington's administration Fisher Ames said, "Though it has made many thousand malcontents, it has never, by its rigor or injustice, made one man wretched." Although the voices of the malcontents partly poisoned for Washington the praise of the majority, he believed that the future would see that his every effort had been for good, and when the final ceremony came, the outgoing President appeared to his successor to be "as serene and unclouded as the day." Adams seemed to hear the wearied general say, "Ay, I am fairly out and you fairly in! See which of us will be happiest."

The chamber of the House of Representatives, in which the ceremony took place, was filled with a multitude as great as it could hold, and as Adams looked about him he saw scarcely a dry eye but Washington's. The tears were not for him, the new official, nor was the interest. All thought, all affection was centred in the tall, gray-haired soldier, with the powerful frame and dignified face, who was saying a solemn farewell to the nation whose first and greatest pilot he had been. A long time they had labored together, the people and their ruler, and many a time they had needed his restraining hand or his exhorting voice. The victory had been won, the foundations for a vast and happy state had

been laid. No more was possible for Washington. He had done what one man could do. His hair was very gray, his chest had grown thin, and his form was slightly bent. It was time for him to step aside, and, like an old man, to wait for death.

CHAPTER XIX

THE END

"These swords are accompanied with an injunction not to unsheath them for the purpose of shedding blood except it be for self-defence, or in defence of their Country and its rights, and in the latter case to keep them unsheathed, and prefer falling with them in their hands to the relinquishment thereof." — WASHINGTON'S WILL.

A FEW days after he laid down his power Washington departed for Mount Vernon, the home which he loved. To the house he had added, during his presidency, a banqueting hall and a dining room, which there were always guests enough to use, in spite of the owner's fatigue and his dreams of rest. Much of each day, whatever his company, and, almost without exception, whatever his health, was spent in the careful work with which a devoted farmer seeks to improve and increase the holdings which are the most quieting and satisfying part of life to him. The retired President's love of his lands, cattle, sheep, hogs, crops, filled his nature, soothed him, gave to his stalwart and sombre soul some of that serious but sufficient happiness which for so many centuries poet after poet, and common man after common man, have found in fidelity to Nature.

"The remainder of my life, (which in the course of nature cannot be long,) will be occupied in rural amusement; and, though I shall seclude myself as much as possible from the noisy and bustling crowd, none more than myself would be regaled by the company of those I esteem, at Mount Vernon; more than twenty miles from which, after I arrive there, it is not likely I ever shall be."

"To make and sell a little flour annually, to repair houses (going fast to ruin), to build one for the security of my papers of a public nature, and to amuse myself in agricultural and rural pursuits, will constitute employment for the few years I have to remain on this terrestrial globe."

"Retired from noise myself, and the responsibility attached to public employment, my hours will glide smoothly on. My best wishes, however, for the prosperity of our country will always have the first place in my thoughts; while to repair buildings, and to cultivate my farms, which require close attention, will occupy the few years, perhaps days, I may be a sojourner here, as I am now in the sixty-sixth year of my peregrination through life."

One of the men who saw him near Alexandria was John Bernard, the actor. A chaise was overturned, near the banks of the Potomac, and a woman was thrown out. As Bernard approached, a horseman, who had been proceeding at a gentle trot, broke into a gallop, reached the scene, and, with the actor's help, after much work, put the chaise right, the horse and baggage in. "My companion," says Bernard, in his "Retrospec-

tions of America," "after an exclamation at the heat, offered very courteously to dust my coat, a favor the return of which enabled me to take a deliberate survey of his person. He was a tall, erect, well-made man, evidently advanced in years, but who appeared to have retained all the vigor and elasticity resulting from a life of temperance and exercise. His dress was a blue coat buttoned to his chin, and buckskin breeches . . . the instant he took off his hat, I could not avoid the recognition of familiar lineaments,—which, indeed, I was in the habit of seeing on every signpost and over every fireplace."

Bernard, whom Washington had seen on the stage, was invited to the house. "Whether," he says, "you surveyed his face, open yet well defined, dignified but not arrogant, thoughtful but benign; his frame, towering and muscular, but alert from its good proportion—every feature suggested a resemblance to the spirit it encased, and showed simplicity in alliance with the sublime. The impression, therefore, was that of a most perfect whole; and though the effect of proportion is said to be to reduce the idea of magnitude, you could not but think you looked upon a wonder, and something sacred as well as wonderful."

To one correspondent he said that he and Mrs. Washington had no disposition to enter into new

friendships. On November 12th, 1799, which was near the end, we find him declining an invitation for himself and his wife on the ground that their dancing days are over; but the stream of visitors at his own house never lessened. "I mount my horse and ride round my farms, which employs me until it is time to dress for dinner, at which I rarely miss seeing strange faces, come, as they say, out of respect for me. Pray, would not the word curiosity answer as well?"

Before we take our final leave of this man, so homely in texture, so superb in achievement, we must follow him once more into the arena. It was probably impossible that he should keep wholly aloof from politics. President Adams, a few days after his inauguration, wrote to his wife: "All the Federalists seem to be afraid to approve anybody but Washington." Smarting under the overshadowing influence of his predecessor, feeling that the public could look to no other while Washington even lived, Adams grew restive. Years later, when he and the leader of the Republican party were philosophizing away a serene old age, Adams, writing that the last eleven years of his life had been the most enjoyable, and that Jefferson also was happy in retirement, added: "I have had opportunity to know, however, that the illustrious Washington was not, and that to his uneasiness in retirement

great changes in the politics of this country were to be attributed, perhaps for the better, possibly for the worse. God knows."

The second President was not the only one who, soon after Washington's retirement, decided that the Mount Vernon farmer had not entirely closed his eyes to public affairs. Jefferson, referring to the belief that Adams was likely to rush into a war with France, wrote to Madison:—

"It is said, and there are circumstances which make me believe it, that the hot-headed proceedings of Mr. A. are not well relished in the cool climate of Mount Vernon . . . but if it has been expressed, it must have been within a very confidential circle." The Republicans circulated the story that Adams was about to marry a son to one of the king's daughters, or *vice versa*;¹ that Washington, hearing of this, and other Anti-Republican practices of the President, called on him three times—first in white, then in black, finally in full regimentals—and, finding his successor still deaf to good counsel, drew his sword and declared that he would never sheath it until Mr. Adams had abandoned his wicked designs. This fable is an amusing impressionistic sign of the times, but the attitude of the Republicans is indicated more realistically in some words written by Madison to Jefferson, in 1798:—

¹ Greydin's "Memoirs," p. 411.

“The one, cool, considerate, and cautious; the other, headlong, and kindled into flame by every spark that lights on his passions; the one, ever scrutinizing into the public opinion, and ready to follow, where he could not lead it; the other, insulting it by the most adverse sentiments and pursuits. Washington, a hero in the field, yet overweighing every danger in the Cabinet; Adams without a single pretension to the character of a soldier, a perfect Quixotte as a statesman. The former chief magistrate pursuing peace every where, with sincerity, though mistaking the means; the latter taking as much means to get into war as the former took to keep out of it. The contrast might be pursued into a variety of other particulars—the policy of the one in shunning connections with the arrangements of Europe, of the other in holding out the United States as a make-weight in the Balances of power; the avowed exultation of Washington in the progress of liberty every where, and his eulogy on the Revolution and people of France, posterior even to the bloody reign and fate of Robespierre; the open denunciations by Adams of the smallest disturbance of the ancient discipline, order, and tranquillity of despotism, &c., &c., &c.”

In contrast with this description, Washington's real views of the presumptions of the French Government are most entertainingly seen in his notes on the copy of Monroe's "Short View," already referred to, in which he treats so scathingly the future President of the United States and the intrigues of the Directory and Talleyrand. When there seemed to be actual danger of an invasion of the United States by

France, Washington consented to take command of the armies, having had ample and correct warning, as usual, from Hamilton, that the public voice would in an emergency loudly call upon him. The two men, after their joint labors and their occasional quarrels, spent in harmony the last years of the older friend's life. Washington made it a condition of his acceptance that he should not be called into the field unless it was necessary. He insisted on the choice of his leading generals, and displeased the President bitterly by his selection of Hamilton, "the most restless, impatient, artful, indefatigable, and unprincipled intriguer in the United States, if not in the world, to be second in command under himself," as it was vivaciously expressed by Adams, who yielded only because Washington insisted that he must either have a free hand or refuse the task. It was an extended and sharp trial of will between the two men, in which Adams gloomily yielded to necessity. For his choice of Hamilton, Washington gave clear reasons to the President:—

"Although Colonel Hamilton has never acted in the character of a General Officer, yet his opportunities, as the principal and most confidential aid of the commander-in-chief, afforded him the means of viewing every thing on a larger scale than those, whose attentions were confined to Divisions or Brigades, who knew nothing of the correspondence of the commander-in-chief, or of the

various orders to, or transactions with, the General Staff of the Army."

"By some he is considered as an ambitious man, and therefore a dangerous one. That he is ambitious, I shall readily grant, but it is of that laudable kind, which prompts a man to excel in whatever he takes in hand. He is enterprising, quick in his perceptions, and his judgment intuitively great; qualities essential to a military character, and therefore I repeat, that his loss will be irreparable."

A certain resemblance to later history may be traced in what Washington said about the applications for commissions. "The applications are made *chiefly* through members of Congress. These, oftentimes to get *rid* of them, oftener still perhaps for local & electioneering purposes, and to please & gratify their party, more than from any real merit in the applicant, are handed in, backed by a solitude for success in order to strengthen their interest." He wished the power in this crisis kept wholly in the hands of the Federal party, for he believed that "you could as soon scrub the blackamore white as to change the principle of a profest Democrat, and that he will leave nothing unattempted to overturn the Government of this Country." The war-cloud passed, however, and the retired commander was called upon for no active service. Nevertheless, as Adams was not popular, there were many suggestions that on the close of his term Washing-

ton should resume the government. He sadly asserted his disbelief that he could draw a single Democratic vote, and his feelings toward his political opponents had become almost as intense as partisan feeling has become since, although the party system was then in its cradle.

“Let that party set up a broomstick, and call it a true son of liberty — a democrat — or give it any other epithet that will suit their purpose, and it will command their votes *in toto*.”

“If *men*, not *principles*, can influence the choice on the part of the Federalists, what but fluctuations are to be expected? The favorite to-day may have the curtain dropped on him to-morrow, while steadiness marks the conduct of the Anti's; and whoever is not on *their* side must expect to be loaded with all the calumny that malice can invent; in addition to which I should be charged with inconsistency, concealed ambition, dotage, and a thousand more *et ceteras*.”

“I am too far advanced into the vale of life to bear such buffeting as I should meet with in such an event. A mind that has been constantly on the stretch since the year 1753, with but short intervals and little relaxation, requires rest and composure.”

Of rest and composure he was to have little more on this side the grave. For what it is worth we may take this letter from Mrs. Washington to a kinsman, dated September 18th, 1799, and cited by Lossing: —

“At midsummer the General had a dream so deeply impressed on his mind that he could not shake it off for

several days. He dreamed that he and I were sitting in the summer-house, conversing upon the happy life we had spent, and looking forward to many more hours on the earth, when suddenly there was a great light all around us, and then an almost invisible figure of a sweet angel stood by my side and whispered in my ear. I suddenly turned pale and then began to vanish from his sight, and he was left alone. I had just risen from the bed when he awoke and told me his dream, saying, 'You know a contrary result indicated by dreams may be expected. I may soon leave you.' I tried to drive from his mind the sadness that had taken possession of it, by laughing at the absurdity of being disturbed by an idle dream, which, at the worst, indicated that I would *not* be taken from him; but I could not, and it was not until after dinner that he recovered any cheerfulness. I found in the library, a few days afterwards, some scraps of paper which showed that he had been writing a Will, and had copied it."

Whether or not Washington had this dream, his letter authentically reflect what he felt as he saw his friends and enemies rapidly dropping about him.

"When I shall be *called upon to follow them*, is known only to the Giver of Life. When the summons comes I shall endeavor to obey it with a good grace."

"Against the effect of time and age no remedy has ever yet been discovered, and like the rest of my fellow-mortals I must (if life is prolonged) submit, and be reconciled, to a gradual decline."

On Thursday, December 12th, 1799, while riding about his farms, he was caught in a storm of rain,

hail, and snow, and severely chilled. He came home and went to bed. That journey, of some fifteen miles on horseback, made daily in the interests of crops and sheep and hogs, had been taken by the long-suffering, grave, and weary planter for the last time. As medical science was futile then, he was subjected to bleeding, and merely weakened. With the knowledge of to-day his life might have been spared until his fears had been realized about the decline of his powers. Devoted friends and relatives stood anxiously about his bed. They could do little for his bodily comfort, and moral strength he borrowed from no man. "Doctor," he said, "I die hard, but I am not afraid to go. I believed, from my first attack, that I should not survive it. My breath cannot last long."

And again, "I feel myself going (I thank you for your attention); you had better not take any more trouble about me; but let me go off quietly. I cannot last long."

Faithful to his instinct to look every truth in the face, the dying statesman and warrior felt his own pulse. Is there a more fitting departure in history than this of Washington's, assuring his friends of his readiness, sparing them needless effort, and himself calmly feeling his ebbing life? The man who had stood so much, who had ignored death on a hundred fields, from boyhood

to old age, treated it now with the serene attention of one strong enough to live and strong enough to die. Washington, dying almost with his hand upon his pulse, left us one of our noblest memories of man,—a soul in whom the highest courage and the truest powers arose to meet the hardest human tests. He waited but a few moments longer for his release. His careful hand fell from his wrist, and immediately his eyes were closed forever. By his will he had freed his slaves and requested that no oration might be delivered at his funeral.

Washington's career "changed the world's idea of greatness." It fixed into an ideal a transformation in the spirit of mankind. No figure in modern history compares with him as an influence toward public conscience. Because he lived as he did live, great men have purified their ambitions and millions of schoolboys have conceived of heroism as allied to virtue. He made enemies in his life, but he left none at his death. When he was once past and judged, his bitterest opponents became his eulogists. Jefferson, the leader of the opposition party, was disappointed when Napoleon became an autocrat, because he had hoped that Washington's fame would lead the French conqueror to emulate his devotion to liberty. From Jefferson to Jackson, from Calhoun

to our own day, the Democratic party has vied with Republicans, Whigs, and Federalists in honoring and obeying the President whose glory they all cherish. As his acts were for the good of all, so now his example is potent not in one faction or in one land, but among statesmen and humble citizens everywhere. On his words Daniel Webster founded his enlightening eloquence. With his deeds Lincoln inspired himself. To-day, in the heated questions of the hour, while we discuss problems unknown to the nation at her birth, among the most potent arguments are analogies drawn from the conduct and doctrine of Washington. He has the enduring confidence of mankind. He won it by talents which were rare, but which were in no wise so great as the probity with which he used them. Had he died after his personal heroism in the wilderness we should seldom have heard of him. Had he died on his farm, in the middle of his life, his departure would have been like that of another. Had he been killed at Yorktown he would have been a great man, one who with many gifts, much patience, and rare tact had seen the country through the war in which the colonies won their independence; but even then his fame would have been not more than half complete. It was well that men should see how he laid down the sword and resumed the plough — well that

they should hear the severity of his reproaches when they offered him the crown,—but still better that their first struggle to reconcile conflicting interests, and make of the states a nation, should be fought through under his firm and dominating eye. Had a corrupt man been the ruler, or a weak one; or even had it been an able factional leader, a Hamilton at the head of one party, or a Jefferson in control of another, we can hardly think the Union would have been entirely safe, for it would not have rested on an equal care for the privileges of all. The tranquillity, the general welfare, the liberty, for which the Constitution was formed, might have been won,—but they might have been lost; and assuredly under no other hand could the transformation have been made with such promptness, dignity, and completeness. If Washington's name is as great as any in the annals of political history, it is because of deeds which the world values now even more than it did a hundred years ago. His was a noble nature, with a sanity, a balance, a power of endurance, seldom rivalled; but his glory is not mainly personal. It is not primarily the effulgence of some rare and individual superiority. It is universal. It is the concentration in a man of those merits which are most needed in the rulers of mankind. It is the triumph of integrity, of patience, of courage, of loyalty, at

the service of his country. It is because he was with constancy for the right, and so powerful in its service, that he has such honor from the world. Only great talents could have accomplished what Washington accomplished, but no genius alone, however prodigious, could fill that place in the world's history which is held by Washington's clearness of view and unbending moral strength.

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